Encounter

May 1977 80p

"Socialism with an Italian face"?

LOMBARDO RADICE

a long conversation with GEORGE URBAN, *leading Marxist-Leninist of the Italian Communist Party's Central Committee argues the case for the libertarian society" of Euro-Communism, defends the dissidents, and offers advice to US President Jimmy Carter*

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The proof is in the reading.

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Oxford University Press

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William Nicholson

Nobody Gets What They Want By Screaming

THE OLD IRON MINE of Freville hasn't been worked now for twenty years or more. There are wounds left in the hills that run down to the sea, man-made welts, cliffs of dark stone that tower above the bathers on the white beaches. Those who walk the winding coast path past the deserted workings feel pity for the hills, as if they must be lonely to be so abandoned by industrious men; but the silent fishermen who work alone in small boats far out to sea know that the old mines are no more than scratches in the hide of the land. They know that the land is alive, just as the sea is alive: the two great ancients on whose flanks, at whose slow mercy, all men lead their tiny lives.

All along the coast of that peninsula there are rocky promontories, outcrops of jagged slate formed by prehistoric convulsions, which hurled the black stone of the hills out to sea. It lies still where it fell then, sawed by the harsh tides. The fishermen who live along the Normandy coast call these rocks *les mauvais coeurs*, the "bad hearts." They say the sea and the land seize the bad hearts of men there, and hold them between them in eternal torment. Visitors love to hear this, for them it is local colour, a genuine folk legend; there are postcards of the rocks for them to send home, with the quaint name superimposed on the picture. Rarely did a summer visitor stop to think that even a legend must have some origin in the real world of men.

THEY WERE A PARTY of three: the man, the woman, and her little boy. The little boy was sick in the plane coming over from Southampton. It was an eighteen-seater Trislander, too noisy for speech, and when he was sick the woman looked up uncertainly at the man. The man only smiled and shrugged, as if to say, Don't worry, I don't mind.

At Cherbourg he said to her,

"Is he always sick on planes?"

"Not always. After all, he is only three."

"Poor little thing."

The little boy clung white-faced to his mother.

"How's my baby?" she said. "Better now?"

"Want to go home", whined the little boy, his voice muffled against her body.

"You can't go home", said the man reasonably. "We've only just arrived."

The little boy kicked at the ground with one foot and cried out: "*Want* to go home!"

"You'd have to go on the alliplane again. You didn't like that."

"*Want to go home*", shrieked the little boy. The man's face hardened at the demanding tone in the child's voice.

"That kid certainly has a strong will", he said.

She squeezed his hand. "I'm afraid he comes with, darling. He's part of the package. I can't send him back to the shop."

"Oh, we wouldn't want to do that."

"You don't mind him, do you?"

"On the contrary. We understand each other very well. Mutual respect."

The little boy was still whining into his mother's skirt, tired by the journey and disoriented by the unfamiliar surroundings of the little airport.

"Sometimes I wish I could send him back to the shop", she said.

"You don't *have* to give in to him, you know", the man said; adding jokingly, "You

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are bigger than him."

They had lunch in the restaurant of the Hotel du Commerce in Freville, looking out on to the rocky coastline and the great white crescent beaches. After lunch they made their way down the steep steps to the plage. They were unprepared for the wind, which whipped up the surface of the white sand and stung their arms and faces. It was the wind too that shook the beached sailing boats, setting up an unceasing clink-clink-clink in the metalled rigging.

Like the other families, on that first day they settled down in the lee of a boat's hull. The wind carried to them the noise of motor-bikes racing further down the beach, and the smell of pancakes frying in the caravan creperie. They showed the little boy how to dig the packed sand with his yellow spade, and then spread out a red-and-white towel for themselves. There they lay side by side in the sun and kissed. As much as he dared, for they were in public, he stroked her brown legs, while in a low voice he told her how she was beautiful, how she was desirable, listing her attractions as if he was buying her part by part in a shop. And she lay silent, gazing up at the blank blue sky, listening, loving it.

THE LITTLE BOY dug slowly with his yellow spade, constructing nothing. Every now and again he looked up at the couple on the red-and-white towel. After a little while, when the man was leaning half over his mother, concealing her, almost crushing her, the little boy threw his spade away and gave a sudden scream. His mother jerked into a sitting position.

"What is it, baby?"

"Does he always begin a conversation with a shriek?", said the man mildly. "I thought the idea was to build up to the shrieking by easy stages."

"What is it, baby?"

"Want a lollipop."

"A lollipop?", repeated the man, in the same wry tone. "I doubt if there are any lollipop shops here." He was reasoning with the little boy. "Did you see a lollipop shop?"

"*Want* a lollipop!" The child's face went pink, puckered up.

"Oh lord", said the woman; and the screaming began.

"I should let him scream", the man advised.

"The difficulty is I do actually have some lollipops in my bag, and he knows it." She was already feeling for her bag.

The man watched her hand the little boy the sticky sweet, struggling with himself not to intervene. The screaming stopped. In the sudden silence they found themselves listening to the cracking of the sugar in the child's mouth.

"So much for his teeth", said the man.

"But he loves lollipops so", she said. "You think I'm terribly weak with him, don't you?"

"You know best." He kissed her on the cheek. "He's your son." But they both knew that it was so, that he thought she was weak with the boy.

They lay back on the towel, and he resumed his caresses. His murmuring words were so low that the little boy, sucking and chewing his lollipop, could not hear the secrets his mother was being told. The sharp car horns on the coast road, the clinking of the masts, the splashes of the children swimming by the jetty, all came clearer on the wind to his ears than those special secrets. He sat naked in the sun and the sand, thin and fragile in that rocky landscape; it did not frighten him; but because he was only little, when he reached out his arms he forgot about how his fingers held the stick of the lollipop, and it slipped from his grasp into the sand.

She was cross when he screamed this time.

"What is it now, baby?"

The man sat up also, frowning, and began brushing sand off his hands and elbows.

"*Want a lollipop!*", the child was screaming. His eyes were squeezed shut, his little hands reached out towards them in violent demand.

"I've just given you a lollipop."

"Sall dirty. Want another one."

They found the sand-encrusted sweet. "Poor baby", she said. "He can't eat that."

It was the way the hands were thrust out, so insistent, so certain of getting what they wanted, that decided the man to intervene after all.

"He's going to have to learn sometime", he said. "If he drops his lollipop in the sand, then that's his lollipop done for. He'll only ever learn to be careful if he has to be. And anyway, if you keep on feeding him those things his teeth really will rot away." He spoke firmly, satisfied that on this point at

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least he was undeniably in the right. He hated seeing children's teeth ruined.

"But he does love them so", she said. "And he'll go on screaming until I give him another one."

"Yes, but why? He'll only go on screaming because you've taught him that screaming pays off."

She looked doubtfully at the little boy, naked in the sand, his rigid little arms vibrating with his screams of frustration. "He does say please when he's in a good mood", she said.

"I oughtn't to interfere, I know. You're his mother, you know best. It just seems to me that he's going to go on screaming at you all the time until you teach him that it doesn't work." He took her hand in his and kissed it, to soften the criticism of his words.

"You've not lived with him", she said in her own defence. "You don't know what it's like when he goes on and on screaming."

He persisted because he believed his advice was best for her, was best for the little boy. "In this life, nobody gets what they want by screaming."

"Shan't I give it him just this once?" All this while the little boy was still screaming. "It did get all dirty, the other one."

"This once? And the next time, this once? And the time after that, this once?"

"I suppose you're right."

Then he said the words that she always remembered later: "Let him scream. It won't do him any harm."

THEY HAD A FRONT ROOM at the top of the Hotel du Commerce. Outside the window stretched the sea, as far as the Nez de Jobourg, a misty form on the horizon. The little boy slept in a cot in the corner of this room, and when he awoke in the morning he saw above him like bars the exposed ceiling joists, and to the side the real wooden bars of his cot. Between the bars, not so far away, he could make out the humps that were the two of them close together on the big bed.

He sat up and found from beneath his pillow his toy tin ambulance. For a while, making soft popping noises with his mouth, he ran it up and down the rubber-sheeted mattress. Then it fell through the wooden bars, his ambulance, and clattered to the floor. He looked down at it as it lay on one side, two of its wheels spinning. He looked up at the humps on the bed. His face slowly crumpled, and he began to scream.

She was halfway out of bed when his voice retrieved her, saying softly, "Darling. Remember."

She returned to the bed. "It'll take him some time to learn", he whispered, and kissed her on the lips. "We'll grin and bear it, won't we? Till the penny drops. Then it'll all be all right."

The little boy screamed himself hysterical, threw himself against the bars of his cot, banged himself against the wall, until at last he sat sobbing in one corner, too exhausted to scream any more. The man held the woman with one loving arm about her, held her from going to him, felt how she trembled under his arm.

When they were making their way from the hotel to the beach he explained his philosophy to her. "Children need to come up against limits, in order to feel secure", he said. She was close by his side, her arms around his waist, listening and nodding her head. "They make demands, more and more demands, until they get to the point where they're told *no*. It's only then that they really know where they stand." The little boy hurried along behind them, undressed for the beach, the yellow bucket in one hand. "If you never tell a child *no*, he's lost, he's at sea." Descending the steep concrete steps behind them, the little boy stopped at the edge of each one before jumping, as if over a cliff, to the one below. With each short drop he recovered himself, looked up to his mother's figure ahead, and hurried to throw himself down the next step. He was afraid of being left behind. "I think it's almost cruel", the man said, "to give in to a child all the time. It's giving the child too much responsibility."

They padded over the hot sand, their faces averted from the stinging wind, past the encamped French families, over the buried chains, past the Yacht Club and the Station de Sauvetage. They were going further from the main beach than they had done on the previous day, because the man wanted privacy. As he said, with a wry glance at the little boy scampering along behind them, "Our bedroom isn't exactly secluded."

They showed him how to hunt for shells

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among the rock pools. They played a game of seeing who could collect the most shells. Intent on the shimmering of the shallow water and the feel of the crusty bumps, the little boy didn't notice for a while that the others were no longer playing the game. He was ready to show them his bucket, which was half-full, but they were no longer there. It wasn't that they were far away, they were very near to him, lying tight together on the red-and-white towel; but he wanted them to see his shells. Then his bucket fell over and all his shells were scattered among the limpets, and some fell back into a pool all the way to the bottom. That was why he screamed.

They rolled apart, but she didn't come to him. "What is it, baby?"

But he didn't want to say what it was. Stiff and naked on a round black rock, he reached out his thin arms and screamed. "Let him scream", said the man once more. "It won't do him any harm."

Perhaps these words were spoken, as the legend runs, from a "bad heart." Perhaps the rocks did hear them, if that means anything, and the sea. Perhaps it was at that moment, somewhere in the slow mind of the land, that sentence was passed.

The little boy wept as he screamed. He was cold in the whipping wind, naked on his rock, chained by the tiny pride of his three years. He screamed because *they* wanted him to stop, and he knew, knew without thought or reason, that he must fight *them* to the end. But the tears that streamed over his cheeks, still the full pink cheeks of a baby, those he cried for a different reason. He wept for pity of himself, and for the loss of love.

"He's only little", she said. "He's not big like us. He can't just get what he wants for himself like we can." She wanted the man to let her go to the boy.

"We may be big, but even we can't get what we want by screaming. All I'm saying is, don't give in to him just because he's screaming. You wouldn't give me something I wanted if I screamed for it, would you?"

"No, I suppose I wouldn't" She smiled at the idea of it, and he knew he had won his point.

The little boy on the rock was sobbing now, lacking the strength to make a greater noise. It came to the man then that he could get the child to understand by means of a game. Quickly he whispered in the woman's ear, and then taking up the fallen yellow bucket he turned towards the little boy and said clearly:

"Nobody gets what they want by screaming. Watch me."

He put some sand in the bucket with his hands and then put it down by his side, but within reach of the woman. At once she snatched it away.

"I want the bucket", cried the man, in what he believed to be a childish voice. A moment later he began to scream. Getting into the spirit of his act, he beat his fists on the sand.

"Nobody gets what they want by screaming", she said, pressing the bucket provocatively against her breasts. The man redoubled his screams. She shook her head and wagged one finger. The little boy on his rock looked from one to another, understanding only that a game was being played between them in which he had no part.

Shortly the man stopped his performance, and asked with careful courtesy,

"Can I have the bucket, *please*."

He was rewarded with the bucket at once; and then with a kiss. They had both been rather excited by his screams.

"Often with a little bit of play-acting", said the man, "you can get something through to a kid that he'll never understand if you just tell him. You have to think like a child thinks."

They both looked at him, and it was true, he was no longer screaming. They were not to know that, standing stiff and isolated on that rock, he had suddenly learned what was going to happen. Unable to reason, unable to shield his unformed three-year-old mind from the forces which surrounded him, he had felt almost like an emotion the purpose of the rocks and the sea. It had not surprised him. He shared with the land a primitive sense of justice, and was too young to have learned sentimentality.

WHEN THEY SET OUT for the beach on the next day, the man was determined to venture even further from the families with their dogs, and the smells of the creperie. He wanted a spot where they could lie together unobserved, until it was time to return to the

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hotel in the early evening. "We could even play the screaming game again", he suggested; and bending down, ruffling the little boy's blond hair, he said, "You like that, don't you?" The little boy didn't answer. He ran along behind them in silence, and when they stopped and laid out the red-and-white towel behind some rocks, he watched in silence. He was waiting. He felt no fear, but there was something like awe in his heart, as if he was waiting for the onslaught of thunder.

They played the screaming game. Far from other people, the man howled and shrieked with unrestrained vigour, pretending to want a lollipop. The woman sat demure on the towel, shaking her head and wagging one finger, repeating the lesson of the game:

"Nobody gets what they want by screaming."

After he had stopped playing the game, he lay down beside her flushed and breathless and they kissed eagerly, their bodies pressed trembling together.

It was probably the screaming that attracted the attention of the two French boys. They came close and grinned over the black rocks, speaking to each other in mocking tones.

"Can't we get any peace anywhere?", demanded the man angrily.

He got up and looked about him. "I'm going to find us a really private place", he announced. "You wait here till I come and get you. You look after your mother, eh?" He patted the little boy on the head and strode off to the water's edge, seeking around the rocky outcrop for a further bay.

The little boy watched him go, knowing not the detail but the power of what was going to happen. Quietly, obediently, he trotted up to his mother and pressed his naked little body against her beautiful brown legs. Automatically she put one arm about him, and in this position, embracing, they waited.

After wading around the intervening rocks the man found a narrow cleft, which led through into a tiny sandy inlet. There were also rocks and small crevasses, but the strip of sand was wide enough for them to lie side by side. And he noted with satisfaction that there was no other way in but from the sea.

The sand was a little darker than in their present spot. Stooping down to feel it, he confirmed that it was damp, but they would be lying on the red-and-white towel. He never heard the movement of the sea, nor felt the intention of the rocks. All that happened was that as he straightened up he slipped on the wet sand and falling, reaching out an arm to break his fall, found that the weight of his body was too great, and suddenly his arm was jammed in a crevasse of the rocky floor. He lay prostrate, exclaiming softly at the mishap, and at the pain in his elbow, which was the part that he was unable to dislodge; but he didn't realise what was happening. Nor did he understand when he felt the cold lap of sea-water flow round his chest, though he struggled harder to free himself. He had never been told of the speed with which the tide comes in on the Normandy coast. It was only when the water, funnelled high by the rocky walls, was pushing bitter and salty at his lips, that he understood what was about to be done to him. And that was when he started to scream.

On the other side of the rocky promontory, well back from the water's edge, they heard him clearly. The little boy looked up at his mother, uncurious, but knowing she would look down at him. He had not had to wait long.

Playing the game the way the man had taught her, she let him scream for a while. Then she shook her head, and wagged one finger, and said,

"Nobody gets what they want by screaming."

The little boy looked up at her and seemed at last to understand. Then, just to show how right she was, the screaming stopped.

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GEORGE URBAN

Communism with an Italian Face?

A Conversation with

Lucio Lombardo Radice

1. Of European Liberty

GEORGE URBAN: *My admiration for the Italian Communist Party's rapid advance from orthodoxy to liberalism—to "Euro-Communism"—is tempered by a nagging doubt whether such dramatic transformations can be genuine, and whether indeed they are possible in human affairs.*

Let me put to you two ideas to illustrate my scepticism. The first might appeal to Lucio Lombardo Radice the scientist/mathematician. It is the commonplace observation: natura nihil facit per saltum, *there are no leaps, no sudden changes in nature.*

The second might appeal to you as a leading member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, and is well formulated by Marx: "The tradition of the dead generations weighs like an Alp upon the brain of the living." Whether we stress the first or the second—and the two really come down to the same thing—your Party's spectacular leap from Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism to its present position seems to call for an explanation.

LOMBARDO RADICE: I have been a member of the Party for forty years. My authentic knowledge, therefore, is confined to that period. Certainly at the time when I joined the Party in 1937, there was no "Italian Communist Party." I became a member of the "Communist Party of Italy", which was a section of the Comintern, of the Third International. The change from that perspective to the Party as it is today is certainly considerable. But if you take that change in its historic context, not in terms of two isolated termini, but as an evolutionary process, then one can speak of no leap but much rather of continuity.

I became a Communist because I wanted to make a contribution to the struggle for liberty, and the best way of doing that in Mussolini's Italy was to join the Communist Party. My father was a left-wing liberal (after he had been, in his youth, a member of the Socialist Party); but I didn't think the most effective manner of fighting for freedom in Italy was to continue in my father's footsteps. Mine was, of course, no special case. Hundreds and thousands joined for similar reasons. Giorgio Amendola's father was a liberal minister who perished at the hands of the fascists. Amendola, too, became a Communist because, in the context of the 1930s, the Communist Party offered the best hope of defeating fascism and promoting democracy. The continuity between then and now is, really, rather convincing. The "leap" is between the false image painted of the Italian Communist Party by anti-Communist propaganda, and the true history of the Party.

—I wasn't so much thinking of any leap in your personal attitude to what Communism stands for as of the entire profile—internal **and** *external—of the Italian Communist Party. And here it would be difficult to deny that the change has been dramatic. From Togliatti's stewardship (under the pseudonym "Ercoli") of the Central European Section of the Comintern at the time of the Great Terror, to Berlinguer's and Amendola's present show of reasonableness, Europeanism and compromise, there has certainly been a leap of amazing*

LUCIO LOMBARDO RADICE *(born in Catania, Sicily, in July 1916) is a leading member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, and Professor of Mathematics at the University of Rome. Among his many books is a life of Antonio Gramsci.*

GEORGE URBAN *is a writer on contemporary history. He is editor and co-author of "Can We Survive Our Future" (Bodley Head, 1972), "Toynbee on Toynbee" (OUP, 1974) "Détente" (Temple Smith, 1976), and "Hazards of Learning" (Open Court, USA; Temple Smith, London, 1977). His much-discussed (and widely reprinted) "Conversation with George Kennan" appeared in the September 1976* ENCOUNTER.

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proportions. I would say the most revolutionary thing about the history of the Italian Communist Party has been its retreat from revolution.

LOMBARDO RADICE: I disagree with you fundamentally on some of these points.

First, after 1935, Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party spoke with two voices. The VIIth Congress of the International marked the beginning of a policy of Popular Front cooperation with other progressive forces to resist Nazism, Fascism and aggression. Stalin wore one face towards *Western Europe*, where the abuse of "social fascism", that is, of the Social Democrats, was suddenly stopped and cooperation and popular unity encouraged, indeed demanded, and another face towards the *Soviet Union*, where repression and all the abuses of power continued. But you must remember that, once he realised the dangers of Nazism, it was Stalin who supported Dimitrov's and Togliatti's Popular Front policies and thereby, in the situation existing at the time, Stalin was, objectively speaking, supporting the struggle for freedom, democracy, and peace.

Second, Togliatti was, with Dimitrov, the originator of the Comintern's great turn in 1935, *i.e.* it was *he* who initiated the Communist parties' democratic approach to socialism in Western Europe. There is no contradiction, indeed there is a distinct continuity, between the Popular Front policies of the 1930s, on the one hand, and the idea of "historic compromise" on the other—between Togliatti and Berlinguer. Berlinguer is in fact a disciple of Togliatti, and so are Amendola, Ingrao and the other leaders of the Italian Communist Party. None of this is my personal opinion; it is Party history.

—But all this happened after 1935. Before that Stalin pursued, as you say, somewhat different policies.

LOMBARDO RADICE: For our present purposes, I don't think it would be very profitable to examine what happened 50 or 60 years ago. 40 years give us an intelligible enough time-span. What is important is that the class struggle, the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the fratricidal war against the Social Democrats were superseded. Stalin supported that change. Its architects were, as I say, Dimitrov and Togliatti. Let me remind you that the newly-born Italian Communist Party—it came to life in 1921—was the only force in our country that fought fascism with a single-minded determination. Let me also remind you that a great many "liberal" and "democratic" leaders of the Italian bourgeoisie supported fascism!

—Stalin discovered what everyone in the West had known for a long time, namely that Hitler was more dangerous to democracy and, what was for him much more important, to the survival of the Communist parties, than were the Social Democrats?

LOMBARDO RADICE: I wonder if "everyone" in the West recognised Hitler to be the major danger. The Munich agreement of September 1938 seems to prove the opposite. In any case, Stalin, in that particular situation, did a fundamentally new thing by adopting a policy, not modelled on Soviet experience but, in fact, running diametrically counter to Soviet domestic policies. From that moment on there was a split between the political posture adopted by the West European Communist parties on the one hand, and the political realities inside the Soviet Union, on the other. With one half of his psyche Stalin spoke of freedom and democracy, but with the other half he pursued and deepened the terror within the Soviet state.

Now the contradiction in our situation arose from the fact that while we, West European Communists, worked for freedom and democracy, we believed at the same time that Russia was a different case, and the Soviet leaders had to act differently. We justified both in our own minds and in our public policies the repression and the Purge trials, because we thought the mother-country of Communism, threatened and surrounded as she was at the time, had to be defended, whatever the cost.

The psychology of this is wonderfully depicted by the late Ernst Fischer's book *Erinnerungen und Reflexionen.*[1] He was an Austrian friend and comrade who probed more deeply than I can hope to do here into the mentality that induced us to justify the crimes of Stalin. Remember: the times were terrible. We, Italian, French and other Western Communists, had every logical and psychological inducement to suppress in our own minds the facts about Stalin's Russia because, for democracy and ourselves to stay alive, we had to support, and be supported by, the Soviet Union. I'm not offering this as self-justification but merely as comment on your assertion that there is a break in our policies. There isn't. Our concern with liberty has been continuous.

—Ernst Fischer argues that, despite this merciless confrontation with the lies he had written over a period of a great many years, he would, in comparable circumstances, act exactly as he did in the 1930s. Would you and your colleagues in the leadership of the Italian Communist Party do likewise today?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Of course we would. We might do it with a different consciousness and we might not do the same things in detail, but our general line would be the same, exactly the same.

[1] See in ENCOUNTER, October 1973, Ernst Fischer's Testament: "Was It All In Vain?" ED NOTE.

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Remember, this wasn't an attitude thought up in a political vacuum. We were fighting Hitler, and the future of socialism absolutely demanded that we choose sides. What the Russians were doing was wrong but impossible not to do and not to sanction. One couldn't fight Hitler with half-measures.

—The implication of what you say is rather interesting. Suppose there is, in 1978, or 1984, or whenever, a grave international crisis between the Soviet Union and the West. Suppose, further, that the Communist parties of Italy and France have by then come to power, or to share power, and would therefore have to make a quick decision whether to stay loyal to the Western Alliance, or not to stay loyal to it. What would you do?

LOMBARDO RADICE: It depends. If there is an imperialist aggression with the avowed objective of rolling back socialism, we would feel entirely absolved of any obligation of "loyalty" to the "defensive" character of NATO and take the side of the Soviet Union. But we would, in such an extreme emergency, also do our utmost to restore peace.[2]

We would stand for socialism, real socialism, in the awareness that there are two ways of supporting socialism in Russia. The first, which is the wrong way, is to give everything that has been done in the Soviet Union our blanket approval. The second way is to say to the Russians: "I don't approve of your policies in this or that matter; I even violently disagree with many of them, but I don't want to see the achievements of socialism in your country destroyed. I am not interested in putting up a defence for Khrushchev or Brezhnev, but I *will* defend the historical results of the October Revolution." You can criticise the Soviet Union from the Left and from the Right. We look at it from the Left—constructively.

The attitude of the Italian Communist Party to dissent in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe rests on the same principle. We have been telling, and are still telling, the Russians that the suppression, harassment, and deportation even of people like Solzhenitsyn and Amalrik and Bukovsky are totally wrong. There must be complete freedom in socialist society or else it cannot call itself socialist.

—Freedom for every kind of opinion?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Every kind of opinion.

—Freedom to write and to publish, for example, Social Democratic or Monarchist opinion?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Yes, every kind of opinion as long as it does not amount to conspiracy. Nowhere is conspiracy permitted—East or West. But every kind of opinion—yes.

—And you would support the right also to fight for such opinions?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Yes, in lawful ways—by the spoken and written word, *etc.*

Let me give you some examples. While Solzhenitsyn was still in Moscow, I was very much interested in him politically. I wrote a long essay about him in one of my recent books, *L'Accusati* (*The Accused*); and I stood four-square behind him in his struggle for civil liberties. Today, I am politically no longer interested in Solzhenitsyn although I am, of course, interested in him intellectually. Why? Because, since his arrival in the West, Solzhenitsyn has abandoned his earlier position of criticising the Soviet régime from within, and has gone over to a frontal attack on Soviet socialism with the avowed intent to destroy it. He is toying with Slavophile ideas, and perhaps even some version of Tsarism. Now, our Party's position is that we will fight for everyone's right to express himself freely; but, of course, that does not mean that we will abstain from fighting some of the views thus expressed. In a socialist society Solzhenitsyn must have every right to say whatever he likes. The Party, on the other hand, has every right to disagree with him.

But there are, in the Soviet Union, other dissident trends of direct interest to the Italian Communist Party, not only in the sense that we support the freedom to express them, but also in that of supporting the programmes thus expressed.

Roy Medvedev, the Russian historian, has written a book, *Was the October Revolution Inevitable?*, which was published in Italian by our Party's publishing house, Editori Riuniti. We published it because Medvedev is a constructive internal critic of the régime. Or take the case of Mlynar. About a month ago De Donato Publishers in Bari brought out Zdenek Mlynar's book, *Prague—Open Question*. Mlynar is, as you know, a leader of the socialist opposition in Czechoslovakia. Well, I wrote the introduction to his book. De Donato is a Communist, I am a Communist; and the Italian Communist Party is in complete accord with Mlynar's argument and with my introduction. This tells you something about our attitude to dissent in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

[2] In the original tape-recorded version this passage read: "We would choose the Soviet side, of course, and we would do so on grounds of principle in the following sense. There are two ways of supporting socialism in Russia. . . ." *etc.* The subsequent correction has been made at the request of Professor Lombardo Radice—ED. NOTE.

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WHAT, TO BE MORE PRECISE, **is** *your general line on dissent in these countries?*

LOMBARDO RADICE: The Party's general line is as follows. The Socialist countries can claim credit for far-reaching, historic achievements. They have done away with private property, the exploitation of man by man, unemployment, inflation and illiteracy. They have exemplary systems of social security, health care and education. These achievements have advanced and matured the consciousness of the citizen who is now demanding, and rightly demanding, that he should be given individual freedom. Our Party believes that this must be the next phase of historical development. Without it there will be a regression in socialist society. The Italian Communist Party does not believe that the demand for freedom is an expression of class-interest. There is, as you know, a great debate in progress in Italy whether pluralism, democracy, and individual freedom are of value only in bourgeois society, or whether they are also essential in a homogeneous society, that is, in one where classes have ceased to exist. We believe that liberty is absolutely necessary in a homogeneous society, too, because, although in such a society antagonistic class-interests no longer operate, there continues to be a great variety of opinions and perspectives which must be given free expression if only to maximise the chances of the further development of socialism. Freedom is a tool for the creative advancement of socialism.

—What about the freedom of those who do not want to use it for the advancement of socialism? After all, the meaning of freedom is rendered nonsensical if you confine it to the "advancement of socialism."

LOMBARDO RADICE: They should have freedom without any conditions. But let's look at the achievements of Soviet society. With all its faults, the Soviet Union is a highly developed, modern socialist country in which the vast majority of citizens want to stay loyal to the structure and institutions of socialism. They have no wish to bring back the landowners and capitalists. Could such a society be threatened, much less destroyed, by individual freedom? This would be an absurd assumption. Let Solzhenitsyn by all means return to the Soviet Union, and let him say with all the power at his command that the Soviet Union should pick up the threads of Holy Russia and authoritarian rule. He could be no danger to socialism, absolutely no danger.

—Why, then, is he not allowed to do so?

LOMBARDO RADICE: This is precisely the problem.

—Is it because the Soviet leadership, consciously or subconsciously, regards **itself** *as the latterday embodiment of Holy Russia?*

LOMBARDO RADICE: I don't think it does.

THERE ARE CERTAINLY *some striking parallels between the two, especially in their shared predilection for obscurantism and fear of light. Take the Soviet leader's obsessive concern with "revisionism." Isn't this a re-run of the story of the Old Believers?*

In the 17th century, the Patriarch Nikon reformed the Orthodox ritual, correcting mistakes in the sacred texts. The name of Jesus in particular was mis-spelled when it was first translated from the Greek. This aroused passionate opposition by the Old Believers who denounced the reforms as "foreign innovations" and an outrage upon the "Third Rome", that is, upon the authority of Moscow. Tito's Yugoslavia, the Prague Spring, and Euro-Communism come to mind as tempting analogies. The Old Believers were put down, but the spirit of Russian superstition and obscurantism has survived to this day.

Or, take the celebrated dictum of one 19th-century Orthodox bishop: "Abhorred by God is anyone who loves geometry—it is a spiritual sin."

Doesn't, then, the spirit of Russia explain the Soviet leaders' intolerance of Solzhenitsyn, Bukovsky, Amalrik, and any unauthorised interpretation of the sacred texts, whether by Rome or by Prague communists? I believe Marx **was** *right in saying that "the tradition of the dead generations weighs like an Alp upon the brain of the living."*

LOMBARDO RADICE: I don't agree. There are no such inherited national characteristics; there is no continuity of the kind you describe. Today's Soviet citizens are members of an enlightened, scientifically inspired, and technologically advanced civilisation. The obscurantism of the 19th century autocracy is dead and buried. What we do have, however, is a persistent conservatism, an immobilism stemming from such very ordinary characteristics as fear of change, fear of any kind of uncertainty. And this is as much at home in the West as it is in the Soviet Union—

—but in the West it has proved a little easier to correct than in the Soviet Union. . . .

LOMBARDO RADICE: This is rather begging the question, isn't it? Even in the Soviet system there is a certain mechanism for self-correction. Khrushchev's report to the XXth Party Congress and the developments that followed it were liberating events of enormous significance. I was in Moscow in 1962. Why, it *was* possible to speak freely, and to write and publish with very few constraints! Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was printed in that period. Then, in 1968, came the Prague Spring, socialism with a human face, and a complete programme for the rejuvenation of socialism in the spirit of

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liberty. There was nothing unnatural, much less anti-socialist, about these developments. They weren't at all out of character. On the contrary: they corresponded to the real demands of people who wanted to safeguard the achievements of socialism by changing and developing it from within.

—Were the people demanding these things real socialists or **the** *real socialists?*

LOMBARDO RADICE: They were socialists who understood the historical necessity of freedom. Today, similar demands are being raised in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. The Russian, East German, and Czechoslovak official press completely misrepresent the facts when they say that these demands are, by some mysterious sleight of hand, engineered and even paid for by the enemies of socialism. Nothing could be further from the truth. The signatories of Charter 77 are true socialists who understand that the development of socialism demands liberty.

You see, after the recent East Berlin conference it was just impossible for the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Eastern Europe to go on as though nothing had changed. After all, at this conference the policy of our Party, and that of other Western Communist parties, was put on the record; and although we agreed with the Russians to try to keep our disagreements within certain limits, the very fact that we exist—that strong West European Communist parties support democratic socialism (not, mind you, Social Democracy), that is to say, the combination of democracy with freedom—is enough to encourage and to support socialist opposition in Eastern Europe. This can go quite far. My friend Wolf Biermann has composed a song on the note: "The Federal Republic of Germany needs a Communist Party nurtured under the Italian sun. . . ." Zdenek Mlynar and other signatories of Charter 77 have sent us messages asking us and the French and Spanish Communist Parties to support them in their predicament. We are doing this because Charter 77 represents a *socialist* opposition.

—You know much better than I how accident-prone ideological and religious movements are—how easy it is for them to split and fall into disunity. I almost hesitate to quote examples as there are so many. However, let me quote one—Petrarch's observation on the great schism in the body of Christianity of his time: "The Turks are enemies, but the Greeks are schismatics and worse than enemies." Doesn't this strike you as being of great contemporary relevance? "The capitalists (Americans, West Germans, Fascists, Zionists, etc.) are enemies, but the Euro-Communists (Chinese, Yugoslavs, etc) are schismatics and worse than enemies", a Petrarchian might write if he were sitting in the Kremlin in 1977.

LOMBARDO RADICE: I dislike talking of the work of the Communist movement in terms of Church history. With that said, the comparison has some validity, because it is our daily experience that the Soviet Government doesn't at all mind having friendly and even far-reaching relations with American or German capitalists and imperialists but will have nothing to do with the internal opposition—your Greeks, if you like. I can explain this, though I would not want to excuse it. The Soviet state came into being at a time of almost insuperable difficulties, internally and externally. We know what these were, so I will not go into them again. The Bolsheviks' response to these difficulties was centralisation and dictatorship—étatism. What we have today in the Soviet Union—and I made this point in my book *The Accused*—is *state-socialism*, not state-capitalism, but state-socialism. The defence of this state-socialist system has become a vested interest of the Soviet leadership and of the *apparat*.

But, of course, nothing in history is eternal. Even Soviet socialism has to change. Therefore the struggle we can see developing more and more articulately today is between *conservative* socialists and *progressive* socialists. Naturally, the conservative Soviet position is extremely strong. Only yesterday I had a televised discussion with Alexander Chakovsky, editor of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, in which Chakovsky was telling me that, as Soviet society was a classless society, there could be no conflicts of political opinion within it. Opinions critical of Soviet society were capitalist opinions. Well, this is not the way we see it.

When the Russians condemn Charter 77 aren't they, in effect, also anathematising the schismatic views your Party advocates under the umbrella-notion of Euro-Communism?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Yes, they are, but it is a little simple-minded to talk of "*the* Russians", because we are sure that there are important contradictions, even struggles, within the Soviet Party itself. I have already mentioned Roy Medvedev—well, there he sits in Moscow, writing his books, sending them abroad, and getting them published abroad without anyone worrying him. You cannot do this kind of thing in the Soviet Union unless you have political support. I understand he has such support.

—Inside the top echelons of the Party?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Inside the Party. But let me ask you a question: who knew the name of Alexander Dubcek in December 1967?

—No one did.

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LOMBARDO RADICE: Yet a few months later his name became a by-word.

—So you think a similar possibility exists in Moscow?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Without a doubt. The struggle for *progressive* socialism has popular roots in the Soviet Union. It is not a child of the imagination of frustrated intellectuals. It is a life-necessity.

2. *Some Advice to the US President*

LET ME TRY to summarise two important points you made in our conversation yesterday. First you said, quoting the testimony of Ernst Fischer, that if circumstances similar to those which obtained in the 1930s arose once again, you would act exactly as you then acted—

LOMBARDO RADICE:—*generally* in the same way—

—generally in the same way, which I take to mean justifying Stalinism for fear of jeopardising the survival of the Soviet system. Second, you said that, if the Italian Communist Party as a governing party were asked to choose sides in a grave international emergency, it would, with qualifications, choose the Soviet side—

LOMBARDO RADICE: It would be more precise to say that we would want to fight neither the United States nor the Soviet Union.

—Naturally, we both hope that the need to make an awesome choice of this kind will never arise. But we must, as realists, assume that a war-like crisis between the West and the Soviet Union is *a possibility.*

Suppose you were in the shoes of Cyrus Vance or Zbigniew Brzezinski and the United States President asked you to frame a policy to take care of the Italian Communist Party's possible rise to power or partial power—what would be your advice to President Carter? You would be facing the problem whether to tell the President that the Italian Communists were a safe bet in power, or whether to tell him that they weren't. Judging by what you told me yesterday, and indeed what you are now saying, the answer is clearly: No, they weren't.

LOMBARDO RADICE: In the hypothetical case you mention—and it is extremely difficult to foresee under what precise conditions a war-like emergency could occur—the Italian Communist Party would probably not want to commit itself to either side. It would be for peace. It would (as I have already said) certainly oppose anti-Sovietism. It would be against any move to roll back the present frontiers of socialism and *a fortiori* to destroy it.

—The big debate going on in Washington and the West European capitals centres precisely on this point: Can the Italian Communists be trusted to uphold NATO, *to be loyal allies in an emergency, to keep military secrets; or would they act as Trojan horses in the Western camp and, at the very least, paralyse the Western defence effort by insisting on debilitating cuts in military expenditure? Your contention that the Party would choose neutrality, and still more, that it would oppose any roll-back of Soviet hegemony, is to my mind an unequivocal way of saying that it would act against the interests of* NATO, *for a war-like emergency would undoubtedly be about the restriction of Soviet hegemony and very likely the destruction of it.*

LOMBARDO RADICE: Perhaps I ought to have expressed myself more clearly. My meaning was simply that in the unlikely event of a showdown, we as a Party could not be expected to work against the general interests of the Soviet Union, and by "interests" I mean the historic achievements of socialism, which we don't want to see destroyed or diminished.

Let me insist once again: Italy, France, and the other European members of NATO must be prepared to be "loyal" to the common "defence" of the alliance if that defence is based on *common decisions*. However, their obligation lapses if the United States ceases to respect the defensive character of the alliance and imposes on it decisions without the concurrence of the other signatories of NATO.

—But as all NATO *decisions have to be unanimous decisions, this would mean that a Communist or Communist-led Italian or French government would possess the crucial power of deciding for the rest of* NATO *what does or does not constitute "defensive" action. And this in turn would, as Henry Kissinger feared, make nonsense of* NATO.

LOMBARDO RADICE: Let me come back to your provocative question: What would I, if I were a Western bourgeois adviser to the United States President, tell him to do about Italy? I would, in the first place, probably tell Mr Carter: "Let's try to rescue Italy by capitalist means—by giving her large loans, beefing up her economy with investments and encouraging petrodollars to flow into the country." (Gadaffi's recent investment in Fiat may well be a sign that the Americans or the Arabs or both are, indeed, thinking of a capitalist rescue operation.) But if, for some reason, this traditional form of rescue cannot be put in train and the collapse of Italy cannot be avoided—

—The collapse of Italy as a country?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Yes, there is a danger of complete collapse in the sense that Italy no longer functions, corruption is rampant, and inflation may go through the ceiling again.

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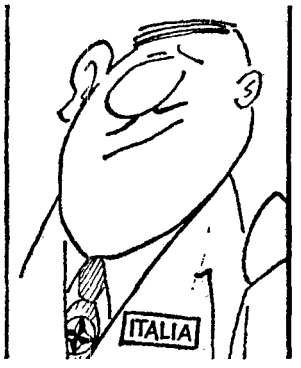
Therefore, if the collapse of Italy, and the catastrophic burden this would place on America and Western Europe economically and politically, cannot be avoided by capitalist remedies, then I would, as a bourgeois adviser, tell the American President to put his faith in the Italian Communist Party, because this is the only force that can get the country back on its feet again. When the Agnellis of Italy give up in desperation, the only serious factor left in Italian society is the Communist Party.

—There are, as it seems to me, justified fears in Washington that the Italian Communists may be saying one thing while out of power and quite another **in** *power. There is certainly nothing in the precedents of Communist rule to make us think otherwise.*

LOMBARDO RADICE: The Americans understand neither the history of the Italian Communist Party nor the complexities of the current situation. It is, in a democratic society, impossible to advocate, year in, year out, a pluralistic, free, democratic type of socialism, and then, as soon

Censorship on



THE LEADERS *of the Italian Communist Party fear three things, two of them international and one domestic. In the foreign sphere they fear Tito's death; for the struggle for the succession might lead to dramatic consequences, and Soviet intervention would compromise the "Westernising" line so far followed by Italian Euro-Communism. They also fear the new foreign policy being launched by President Carter, for they suspect it will be one of containment of Communism rather than one of concessions to it. On the home front they fear the concentration of new forces that have been asserting themselves in Italian society and in the Christian Democratic Party. One of the principal signs has been the extraordinary and growing success of Milan's* Giornale Nuovo.

So they decided to pass over to the open offensive before the weather, which has hitherto been favourable to them, started working against them, both at national and international level. One of the things that has most roused their ire has been Giornale Nuovo*'s involvement in Télé-Monte-Carlo.*

ENZO BETTIZA **was recently elected to the Italian Senate. He is, with Indro Montanelli, the chief editor of a new daily newspaper in Milan, the "Giornale Nuovo." Their campaign to defend democratic liberties in the market place of ideas in Italy has led them to expose the realities behind "Euro-Communist" professions of liberalism: namely, the growing Party-line censorship in radio, television, publishing houses, school textbooks, etc., "even before" (as Andrey Sinyavsky, himself a victim of blue-pencilling on Italian television, has ironically put it) "the Communists have come to power."**

The latter puts out programmes both in French and Italian. At the beginning of 1976 the Télé-Monte-Carlo management signed agreements with the Giornale Nuovo *team to expand its Italian service with the latter's professional assistance, and it now provides a daily programme of news and comment twenty minutes in length in which Indro Montanelli, myself, Cesare Zappulli and other* Giornale Nuovo *specialists in economics, art and sport appear in turn. The programme had a considerable impact on the June 20 election campaign and has been a great success with the public in Piedmont, Lombardy, Sardinia, Tuscany, Umbria, and as far away as Rome. The number of those who watch it every evening has been estimated at between six and seven millions (and this television success has certainly contributed to increasing the circulation of the* Giornale Nuovo*).*

The Communists were showing a certain amount of prickliness before 20 June, but after that date this developed into a veritable offensive. They now demand that the Télé-Monte-Carlo Italian service should cease. This would certainly be only a first step. The second might (or rather, according to the prevailing logic, should) be the suppression of Giornale Nuovo *itself. "Salami tactics" have not changed much from Budapest to Prague to Rome. The only difference is that the Euro-Communists use more delicate (and more) "legal" knives.*

The pretext by means of which Berlinguer and his political friends propose to silence Télé-Monte-Carlo is Clause 40 of the recent law on the Italian broadcasting corporation which seeks to impose restrictions on material televised to Italy from abroad. This is a mere pretext, I repeat, since neither the Italian Communist Party nor the Italian Socialist Party noticed anything illegal about the broadcasts from Yugoslavia or the Swiss-Italian service received in Italy. But they sat up and took notice as soon as "Montanelli's television journal" went on the air, and quickly called on the Government, which was already influenced by them, to "enforce Clause 40 of Law 103 without delay."

I RAISED THE MATTER *in the Senate recently and called for a debate. The Christian Democrats and the Government, represented by Signor Columbo*

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as we are put in power by the votes of the people, to repudiate it, to suppress freedom and set up the dictatorship of the proletariat.

—This is not going to happen?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Of course it isn't. It is quite unreasonable to suppose that you can say one thing on Monday and do the opposite on Tuesday.

—But this is very much what you **can** *do if you are a Leninist—*

LOMBARDO RADICE: I don't think I should go into your very peculiar idea of Leninism which you seem to conceive of as a confidence trick. Let me simply say that, while you can manoeuvre one football team against another, you cannot manipulate and deceive millions of workers. They have voted for you because you have given them a certain programme. You can't suddenly choose to do the opposite.

—What you are saying is: You would advise the American President to ask the Italian Communist

the March

(the Minister of Telecommunications), took my part against the obscurantist attacks of the Marxist Left. I called on the Government to amend Clause 40 on the ground that it was inconsistent, not only with recent decisions of the Constitutional Court in the field of television, but also with the Charter of Human Rights and the Helsinki agreements on the free circulation of ideas. In spite of violent attacks from the Left, the Minister (while seeing himself obliged to give notices to the managers of the various relay stations!) agreed with me on the basic issue.

As a consequence of a combined campaign of intimidation and (more or less) legal interventions on the relay stations, Télé-Monte-Carlo no longer reaches Rome. This is the first grave act of censorship imposed on the still half-democratic Italian society by a Communist movement that is not even in power yet! It is easy to imagine what will happen when it achieves power—and secures control, not only of the Ministry of Telecommunications, but also of the Ministry of the Interior.

To appreciate the vacuousness of the Euro-Communist argument it is sufficient to recall two facts. In the first place, the material broadcast by foreign television accounts for only 2% of the total Italian media budget (dailies, weeklies, radio, television, etc.), and of this 2% about 90% remains in Italy to pay for work done by Italians (producers, actors, technicians, operators, workmen et al.*). The other 10% does not, as the Communists claim, constitute a flight of capital abroad, but merely forms part of "capital circulation" in the form of the normal payment of bills due to a territory such as the principality of Monaco which forms part of the Common Market customs area (of which Yugoslavia and Switzerland, which the Communists do not mention, are not members).*

The second fact is even more significant. Quite apart from Télé-Monte-Carlo, there is, of course, the celebrated Radio-Monte-Carlo, which broadcasts an Italian news programme three or four times a day, resulting in a "movement of funds" greater than that caused by Télé-Monte-Carlo. Why do the Communists never mention that? Because the programme is prepared by the Corriere della Sera, *and that journal nowadays represents a media force on behalf of the conquest of power in Italy by the "Euro-Communists."*

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER *lies elsewhere and is much more dangerous. The struggle for power in Italy has reached a turning-point. Before 20 June the Communists did not defend the monopoly of* RAI, *the Italian broadcasting corporation, because they had only two representatives on the board of the State radio and television office, while the Christian Democrats had seven. Now, with the reorganisation of* RAI *that followed 20 June, a radical change is imminent; the Communists and Christian Democrats will have six representatives each (the board consists of fifteen members altogether). So, if we add to the six Communists two Socialists, one weak independent and one or two pliable Christian Democrats (unfortunately there appear to be more and more of these), we shall have a situation in which the monopoly, while it continues formally to be in the hands of the state, is in fact in the hands of the Communists. Our democratic battle involves far more than the survival of Télé-Monte-Carlo. It extends to the whole of the* RAI, *on which democrats who still want to resist have, for the time being, an operational base.*

Our current struggle is to oppose a Communist monopoly of the media. Unfortunately few foreigners have any clear idea of the current situation in Italy. Many European and American intellectuals, journalists and politicians seem to me to be making the same disastrous error of appreciation in relation to "Euro-Communism" that their counterparts made in relation to "Euro-Fascism" half-a-century ago (say, between 1922 and 1925). At that time the European (and bourgeois) face of Benito Mussolini was talked of in the same terms as Emilio Berlinguer is talked of today. The fog of ignorance or indifference that overlays the reality of the political struggle in Italy conceals from view what is really at stake. As I see it, we are facing what is, in many respects, a repetition of the confrontation between monolithic Leninism and liberal democracy that took place in a cruder form in Portugal in 1975 when Cunhal, after seizing the Catholic radio, was preparing to confiscate the Socialist newspaper Republica *as well.*

Enzo Bettiza

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Party to rescue the Italian capitalist/bourgeois social order for the general good of the West?

LOMBARDO RADICE: No, not at all. I would tell Mr Carter that this is the least damaging way for the West to cut its losses in Italy. For clearly the Americans have to lose *something* in Italy if they cannot, or do not choose to, rescue Italy by capitalist methods. If so, it would be better for them to lose a hand rather than a limb, or a limb rather than the whole body. The Italian Communist Party would not—let there be no mistake about this—save Italy for the benefit of capitalism. We would save it for the benefit of democracy and the prospect of socialism. In this sense, our accession to power or partial power *would* damage the interests of imperialism—there can be no doubt about that.

But what alternatives do the Americans have? Suppose we join the government, and the Americans put us under siege conditions politically and economically—well, there will be an economic collapse. The Communist Party and indeed the other political parties would find themselves forced into the arms of the Soviet Union. Italy would go socialist, perhaps on the Soviet model, because all other possibilities of working out a solution have been denied.

We would then see a repetition of Cuba, and the Americans would owe the loss of Italy to the same short-sightedness and ineptitude as lost them Cuba.

YOUR PARTY IS IN *a bit of a dilemma, isn't it? Should you, for whatever reason, be catapulted into power to rule single-handed, Italy's unmanageable conditions and your insufficient electoral support would sink you even without active American disapproval. If, on the other hand, you are thinking (as I believe you are) in terms of Communist participation in an Italian coalition government, then my guess would be that you could not carry out a genuinely Communist programme, and you would therefore be gravely discredited in the eyes of your electoral supporters.*

LOMBARDO RADICE: It wouldn't be a question of putting into effect a Communist programme.

—A compromise?

LOMBARDO RADICE: No, it would be a question of advancing democracy, of taking the first steps towards injecting socialism into Italian democracy.

Let me clear up a popular misconception. It is completely false to think of the "historic compromise" as some nicely arranged agreement at the top between Berlinguer and Andreotti. If the Italian Communist Party does come to power, it will be in the context of some profound crisis which would, among other things, involve the Christian Democrats in abandoning many a long-held conservative position. To be quite candid with you: our participation in government would be an earthquake in Italian politics, not a carefully premeditated, peaceful happening.

—That would in itself, in my opinion, militate against Vance and Brzezinski accepting your advice. But wouldn't they have reason to worry also on a different score? Wouldn't the acceptance by the United States of the Italian Communists as bona fide *partners in government have a devastating impact in France and possibly even Germany, so much so that it would undermine the entire legitimacy of* NATO*?*

LOMBARDO RADICE: Well, the American politicians must learn to have a little hindsight and foresight. NATO is now almost 30 years old, the world has changed. The American domination of Western Europe is over; the submissiveness of Western Europe is over too. If the Americans have not learnt that much from experience and all their expensive international symposia, policy analyses, think-tanks and the rest, then they have learnt nothing.

—I think it would be a great deal easier to persuade the United States President to recognise America's changed position in Western Europe if Moscow could be brought to recognise **its** *changed position in Eastern Europe. But this has proved patently impossible. It* **has** *been possible for Spain and Portugal to change from fascism to democracy. The Americans have not stood in the way—in fact, they have aided the process. No comparable development has been permitted by the Soviet leaders in Eastern Europe. I would have thought there was room here for a little reciprocity.*

LOMBARDO RADICE: Oh certainly. There must be change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but it is not true to say that change is impossible. There have been two important changes in Poland, when Gomulka came to power and when he was thrown out of power. There was Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968—all dramatic events of great consequence.

—I would say: there have been **attempts** *at change . . . until the Soviet tanks rolled in and change was nipped in the bud.*

LOMBARDO RADICE: Ah, but the suppression cannot last. These countries *have* to develop. The only question is: Will the change be peaceful or dramatic, even tragic? Of course, one hopes there will be no fresh tragedies; but change must come. Talking of possible American attitudes to Italy, let me give you another example of American unintelligence. It is beyond any doubt by now that Allende was overthrown and Pinochet brought to power with American assistance. Now, Allende was no Soviet stooge. In fact he failed to get any of the Soviet economic support he

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needed. Why was he overthrown? Because the Americans were thinking in simplistic terms ("a communist is a communist") and lacked intelligent foresight. Now they are paying a very high political price for their unwisdom and have a terrible burden on their conscience. They should have supported Allende!

—The Americans probably had the warning of Cuba in mind. But I am a little hesitant to condemn the United States for Chile before condemning the Russians for Czechoslovakia. And if you look at the two from the perspective of great-power interests, you might argue that the Russians could no more afford to take a chance with the status quo in Czechoslovakia than the Americans could with Allende. Political conscience is a highly elastic quality—power-interests are not. They demand concrete action.

LOMBARDO RADICE: I'm not defending the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. It is well remembered that the armed occupation of Czechoslovakia was immediately and strongly condemned by us, and that this attitude of the Italian Communist Party is firmly maintained. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was completely wrong and politically counter-productive. It has solved nothing, as we can well see today. The Russians traded a short-term gain for a long-term liability.

3. The Repudiation of Leninism?

IS THE Italian Communist Party planning to make a **principled** *critique of Soviet rule in Eastern Europe? So far you have criticised isolated events (though you have done so very effectively). I would have thought the time was ripe for a critical appraisal of the entire structure of Communist rule in Eastern Europe.*

LOMBARDO RADICE: What we have in mind is not a critique of the *principle* of socialism in Eastern Europe, for the principle is clearly right, but a broad historical/sociological analysis of the state of the game at the present time. Our current understanding of it is obviously inadequate. Some work in this general direction is already being done at the Gramsci Institute. (For example, there has been an important discussion on Stalinism between the historian Giuseppe Boffa of our Party and the French communist Martinet.) But much more needs to be done. We must try to re-define the nature of the societies that have emerged in Russia, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania. Are they socialist societies? Are they transitional societies? What are they? They are clearly post-capitalist societies, for they have taken the means of production into public ownership, abolished private property and so on; but this does not tell us very much about their real character. As you know from our talk yesterday, my own description of these societies would be "state-socialism", but others may find a more adequate characterisation.

The general outline of our interpretation would be that these societies are suffering from a crisis of uneven growth: they have developed enormous heads intellectually, technologically and economically, but these heads are not supported by commensurate bodies in terms of political structure, cultural emancipation, civil rights, and so forth.

—Would you, then, say that the Leninist interpretation of Communism is both morally wrong and a practical failure?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Leninism is a complicated subject. One cannot reduce it to a matter of mere tactics, or some prescription for a mindless dictatorship, or a blueprint for dogmatism—all this is old propaganda. Leninism is a profound, scientific approach to revolution in a relatively under-developed country. It was the spirit and the engine of the greatest progressive socio-political breakthrough of our century. Far from being a failure one would want to disown, it was and is the most powerful motor for liberation in human history.

What I would say is that, for us today, the whole system of power-from-the-top, the entire idea of dictatorship, has become false, utterly false, even if in those early and terrible decades of Soviet isolation in a capitalistic environment and under fascist attack, Leninism was the simplest way of maintaining unity at home and security abroad.

But the fact that we repudiate the idea of dictatorship does not at all mean that socialism itself is false. Self-management, a much wider distribution of power, and participation rather than state-socialism—these are the reforms most needed in Eastern Europe. But we must not ignore the fact that, historically speaking, socialism in Russia has given the Russian people more real freedom than they had before the October Revolution, because it put an end to the exploitation of man by man, outlawed unemployment and inequality.

—Let me again probe into the extent of freedom you would be prepared to see established in Russia and Eastern Europe. Yesterday you said that every kind of individual freedom should be permitted as long as it does not involve conspiracy. But the freedom to read, write, publish, listen to broadcasts, meet and discuss without hindrance would sooner or later lead some

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people to demand a change of system. Would they be allowed to do so?

LOMBARDO RADICE: This is not a possible hypothesis. For six months in 1968 there was complete freedom in Czechoslovakia; yet no one demanded a return to capitalism. Socialism was in no danger of being destroyed.

—But if you talk of complete liberty, you must surely include in it the liberty of the individual to share his views with like-minded individuals, and if these like-minded individuals decide to call their association a political party—a social democratic party, for example, or an agrarian conservative party—they should, according to your definition, be allowed to do so and test the popularity of their ideas in free elections.

LOMBARDO RADICE: You are thinking schematically—in the stereotypes of pre-socialist forms of government. After a probably crisis-ridden liberalisation of socialism in Russia and Eastern Europe the forms of government there might vary. There might be more than one party, there might be only one party, or there might arise something completely new—we don't know. But even if the single-party system came to stay, there would be wide-ranging debate within that party, there would be a progressive and a conservative wing—there would be internal democracy. We saw in Czechoslovakia in 1968 that the revival of social democracy just did not come up as a problem. There was something quite different—the beginnings of a new kind of democracy on the basis of the existing structure of socialism.

—But the Russians feared what I, for one, also thought might happen: the eventual collapse of Communism.

LOMBARDO RADICE: The Russians feared highly unintelligently. They were fighting shadows.

—But complete individual freedom necessarily implies the legitimacy of a variety of political programmes, including that of saying "no" to socialism. I'm sorry to harp on this point but it seems to me crucial.

LOMBARDO RADICE: I don't believe any such thing would happen. Would any part of the population want to see a regression from socialism, a retreat from a higher form of society to a lower? Can you see a Hungarian or Rumanian agrarian party wanting to return the land to the large landowners?

—I don't think they would want to do that, but on your principle of liberty, the possibility that such a programme might emerge must be kept open. Many Hungarians might say: "We want to return to individual farming—we want to divide the lands of the cooperative and state farms—", and they might demand their own political representation. Moves of this kind were, in fact, made as early as Imre Nagy's "new course", much before the Hungarian Revolution of October 1956.

LOMBARDO RADICE: Well, people may want to "demand" all sorts of things. In Italy there are people who want to revive the Monarchy! In Russia there may be people who would want to return to Solzhenitsyn's Holy Russia. But these are insignificant minorities; they are no danger to socialism. Solzhenitsyn should be allowed to return to the Soviet Union and preach his gospel. The hollowness of his claims would be shown up at once.

I'M NOT SO *sure. I think he would have a large following, and there would be an even larger mass movement to his political right.*

LOMBARDO RADICE: Perhaps a couple of millions in an enormous land—no more. History is strong. Solzhenitsyn and Bukovsky and Amalrik and all the others, known and unknown, should be free to say what they like. We are, after all, talking of countries that have had socialist rule for a very long time—60 years in Russia and 30 in Eastern Europe. It is entirely unhistorical as well as unreasonable to suppose that they would want to turn the clock back. The Hungarian events of 1956 were a different matter: socialism in Hungary was a weak plant, only some seven years old, and there was a danger of a regression to capitalism.

—1956 was a counter-revolution?

LOMBARDO RADICE: I was in favour of Russian action in Hungary, and this is no secret—

—. . . in favour of suppressing the revolution?

LOMBARDO RADICE: . . . of controlling it, because the danger of counter-revolution was strong. There was Cardinal Mindszenty speaking for the former landowners; there was violence in the streets against Communist workers and so on. Socialism was as yet without roots, therefore the roots had to be protected.

But to talk of "counter-revolution" in *Czechoslovakia* in 1968 is pitiful nonsense. In Prague no one even remembered the names of the former factory proprietors and landowners! The present tendencies to reform Czechoslovak socialism are even more distinctly socialist than were the reforms of 1968, if that is at all possible.

The Soviet leaders and the Czechoslovak communists must learn to understand that it is impossible for socialism to advance without taking risks. I'm a great admirer of Kafka, and I realise that the chances of human planning and reason being mocked and frustrated by unreason, perversity, or sheer accident are very great. But that does not absolve us of the responsibility of trying to advance from structures and institutions which have outlived their useful-

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ness to others which are more relevant to our needs.

AFTER THE OCCUPATION of Czechoslovakia I published an article in an American quarterly under the title of "Removing the Hyphen", and my meaning was that the Prague reform-communism signified the first important move by a ruling Communist party to cleanse Communism of its Leninist accretions by removing the hyphen between Marxism-Leninism and returning the movement to its original, Western inspiration. With the ballasts of Russian autocracy and the heritage of Byzantium lifted, the Communist movement might recapture its appeal to Western societies (or so I interpreted the essential meaning of the Prague Spring). Aren't your strictures of the rigidity of the Soviet system and your support of the Czechoslovak socialist opposition tacitly based on a similar reading?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Not at all. We are, and we have always been, anti-dogmatists, and that is also why we have been Leninists. Lenin defied the prevailing Marxist orthodoxy that a proletarian revolution could not be carried out before there has been a bourgeois revolution. He did, rightly, lead the Russian proletariat to victory despite the fact that the proletariat was small, the country minimally industrialised, the economy abysmally backward and the majority of people illiterate.

—He was a revisionist of Marxism. . . .

LOMBARDO RADICE: He certainly was that. Now Gramsci was a revisionist of Lenin; for example, Gramsci's notion of "hegemony" (of the working class) is very different from Lenin's idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat"; and our programme of socialism through democracy is a revision of Gramsci. We are all revisionists or, if you like, Marxists-Leninists in the sense that we have all adapted, changed, or ignored the texts according to the demands of the concrete situations in which we found ourselves.

There is, therefore (to say it again), no rupture, no sudden leap in our movement. In his explanation of the dialectic Hegel uses the word "*aufheben*", which can mean both "to invalidate" and "to raise" or "to hold up." Our continuous revisionism has done justice to the Hegelian notion in both senses. We have superseded certain irrelevant ideas in the history of socialist thinking, the better to be able to promote socialism through relevant ones. We are all Marxists—Leninists—Gramsciists—Togliattiists—because they were all revisionists. I am very fond of a sentence in a famous letter of Galileo's: "If Aristotle were alive today", he wrote, "he would say I am his best pupil because I challenge his theories."

—A tour de force of Marxist thinking—

LOMBARDO RADICE: No, simple dialectics.

—Your dogma, then, is the repudiation of dogma.

LOMBARDO RADICE: No, it is not a dogma; it is practice.

—Would you say that the Italian Communist Party has, for all practical purposes, ceased to be Leninist in the dogmatic sense in which Leninism is interpreted in Moscow? Certainly the Leninist formula—of a close-knit, highly disciplined, conspiratorial body of professional revolutionaries, who bring revolutionary consciousness to the working class from outside the working class and impose in its name the dictatorship of the proletariat—does not seem to me an election winner in Italy in 1977.

LOMBARDO RADICE: As I've just said: for us in Italy the Leninist conception of party dictatorship is utterly false. It wasn't, of course, false for Lenin, because in Russia's particular circumstances in 1917, dictatorship by a small and ruthless party was the only way of having a revolution.

—And Gramsci, who is often quoted against Lenin by the Italian Communists, entirely agreed with Lenin. In July 1918 he wrote (in Il Grido del Popolo*): "In Russia . . . the proletariat has taken over the direction of political and economic life and is establishing its own order. Its own order, not socialism. . . . Dictatorship is the fundamental institution guaranteeing freedom. . . ."*

LOMBARDO RADICE: But Gramsci also said that the dictatorship was to be a transitional phenomenon, to be dissolved as soon as the revolution was guaranteed against *coups d'état* by factious minorities.

In any case, we broke, in practice, with Lenin's theory of the party when Togliatti returned from Moscow in 1944, and we decided to make the Italian Party a mass-party, with broad popular appeal—no dictatorship by a small band of leaders, no *ex cathedra* enunciations of the truth, and so forth. The basic Italian criticism of Lenin was made by Togliatti.

—I am a little puzzled. If you don't agree with the Soviet insistence that Leninism is as valid in 1977 as it was in 1917—if you are gravely critical of the rigidity of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe—if you reject "state-socialism" as a perversion of socialism—and if you feel, as Berlinguer told us not so long ago, better protected as a Communist Party behind the defensive shield of NATO *than you would outside it—why do you dutifully go to all these international Communist gatherings? Why do you sign their declarations? Why not make a clean break and accept no tutoring by Moscow and no community of purpose with them?*

LOMBARDO RADICE: The East Berlin conference may have been the last of the traditional type we attended. But remember that the East Berlin

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document has clearly spelled out the end of a monolithic Communist movement and established every Communist Party's right to independent action. Remember further that we had made our objections to a monocentric movement very clear long before East Berlin. For example, at the time of the 1971 Moscow conference, there was a long debate in our Central Committee—which I attended—whether we should put our names to the proposed communiqué. We decided to sign only the first part, which dealt in generalities, such as the necessity to fight for peace, defeat imperialism and the like; but we never signed the rest.

I have to object to your statement that we accept "tutoring" from Moscow. This lacks all factual basis—it is propaganda. There is between Moscow and our Party a partial community of purpose based on issues such as the maintenance of peace, détente, and support of the national-liberation movements. But such links as we have with the Russians are freely chosen. Your advice that we should "break" with the Soviet Union is a little too obvious, coming as it does from the bourgeois-conservative side, for it is given in the clear expectation that the Italian Communist Party would eventually transform itself into a classical Social Democratic party.

BUT IT is *true, isn't it, that you have, for many years, and despite your growing differences, attended all these conferences, sunk (or kept quiet about) your disagreements, and upheld the fiction (if fiction it was) that the World-Communist movement is, with all its tactical difficulties, ultimately based on certain shared principles of which, until quite recently, the Soviet Union was the principal interpreter and spokesman.*

Now I invite you to think of this spectacle from the point of view of the man in the street in Austin, Texas. He would not be conversant with the refinements of Communist philosophy, but he might well ask: If the Italian Communists now preach freedom and yet attend these international synods, they should surely see the logic of permitting Polish farmers and Czecho-slovak social democrats to attend "green internationals" or the meetings of the Socialist International with Willy Brandt and Olof Palme and Helmut Schmidt and Bruno Kreisky. Why (he might reason) should these East European citizens not be allowed to go to Paris or London every two or three years, discuss common problems, sign common documents and benefit from the solidarity of **their** *movement just as the Communists do from theirs? I wouldn't know how to answer him.*

LOMBARDO RADICE: The answer is simple. They should be allowed to go to all these meetings in complete freedom. This flows automatically from what I told you about the Italian Communist Party's critique of the socialist régimes in Russia and Eastern Europe. We are against all restrictions of freedom of travel, freedom of discussion, freedom of assembly.

—So these East European people should be allowed to confer with Schmidt and Palme and return home to put their ideas into action?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Yes, of course; we *are* for freedom.

—Including this kind of freedom to organise internally on the basis of a larger international understanding?

LOMBARDO RADICE: Absolutely.

Of course, I don't think Helmut Schmidt's kind of social democracy would have the slightest chance of success in Russia or Eastern Europe. It has been overtaken by history.

—But your insistence that the Social Democrats, with their rival interpretation of international socialism, should also be free to organise is mortally opposed to the Soviet position.

LOMBARDO RADICE: Yes, it is.

Naturally, I don't believe that international meetings of bourgeois parties or groups could overcome the problem that history is not on their side. The Communist Parties' common platform is rooted in the supra-national character of the world proletariat. It envisages a supra-national and better world order as expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*. The bourgeois parties are caught in the contradictions of a hetero-geneous social order. They have no vision of a better deal for mankind. I can, therefore, see no great danger coming from that quarter.

TO BE COMPLETELY FRANK *with you, Professor Lombardo Radice, I would not, if I were a young Italian radical, with fire in my belly, vote for your Party or support it. For what have I heard you say in this conversation but words of caution, compromise and liberalism? You have reneged on the dictatorship of the proletariat. You are very doubtful about Leninism. You don't seem to want to take power single-handed. And your sense of revolution reminds me of nothing so much as Eduard Bernstein's old claim that in Marx's theory there is no room for revolution—the class struggle leads to class reconciliation, reformism, and socialist democracy, with the bourgeoisie and the proletariat melting into a mass of classless citizens. How could this satisfy me seeing what a beastly mess Italy has got herself into? I would want to put a bomb under it and blow it sky high; but to do that I would have to go to the anarchists and Maoists, for there appears to be no room for revolution in the programme of the Italian Communist Party. Don't you think your eagerness to adapt has now reached a stage where your Party has lost its sense of legitimacy?*

LOMBARDO RADICE: We had our problems with the radical students in 1968, and in a sense there

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was then a crisis of Italian Communism because we seemed to be overtaken on our Left. But all that is over. Today it is not our Party that is in crisis but the Maoists and anarchists who are in complete disarray. Why? Because revolution is not about rebellion—it is a serious thing. . . .

—. . . too serious to be left to revolutionaries?

LOMBARDO RADICE: . . . Too serious to be left in the hands of anarchists. I am sick to death of being reproached by the bourgeois side that our Party is not revolutionary enough. This is clearly an attempt to blacken us in the eyes of the revolutionary youth. But more and more of these young people realise that in an advanced, late-capitalist society our Party's policy is the only effective one. Therefore a great many young Leftists have joined our party or come back to our Party, and the anarchist groups are rapidly disappearing (witness, for example, the splitting of the PDUP). Unemployment has, of course, caused great social tensions, but the young Leftist rebels are politically confused and no challenge to our Party. That our apparent support of the institutions of bourgeois society and our willingness to compromise is a betrayal of our trust and weakens the appeal of our Party, is a misjudgment of our situation. Our electoral support, our strength in local elections and in the trade unions have grown parallel with our moderate policies which are, however, moderate only in appearance.

LET ME TAKE YOU BACK to the early history of the Italian Socialist Party of which Benito Mussolini was one of the leaders. For it appears to me that your popular appeal in Italy in 1977 may have something to do with a simple but highly important discovery the young Mussolini made, as a Marxist socialist, between 1910 and 1914.

Very briefly: in 1910 Mussolini edited a paper called La Lotta di Classe (The Class Struggle). *In 1914, having been ousted from* Avanti, *he decided to call his new daily paper* Il Popolo d'Italia (The Italian People). *Why? Because in those four years Mussolini discovered that the international brotherhood of the working class was a pious hope of socialist theoreticians. There were no real bonds between working-class people in France and Germany and England and Italy. (And, as we now know, Mussolini's foresight was amply proved right when, in 1914, the German Social Democrats patriotically voted for the Kaiser's war credits.) But what there was in Italian society, and ready to be enormously exploited, was Nationalism. This was Mussolini's profound discovery. His combination of socialism and appeal to the* popolo *of Italy brought him to power and secured him the Italian people's consensus for twenty years.*

I do not want to sound too offensive, but it would seem to me that mutatis mutandis *the Italian Communist Party has made a similar discovery. While you do not make an appeal to Nationalism, you do, nevertheless, let it be known at every turn that you are an entirely* **Italian, home-grown** *party (which you are); and I would have thought your popular appeal is not so much due to your moderate policies, as to this consciously fostered image of socialism* **and** *Italianism—socialism with an Italian face.*

LOMBARDO RADICE: The analogy is false. As you know, our terms of reference are not nations but classes. We do not try to appeal to Nationalism; we are against it. Our principle is that the leadership of Italian society has to pass to the working class, and this is, you must admit, a very different policy from that followed by Mussolini who sought to vest the leadership of Italian society in the bourgeoisie. . . .

—the Nation—

LOMBARDO RADICE: . . . nominally the Nation, but in fact the bourgeoisie and, to be more precise, the more aggressive and powerful sections of the bourgeoisie. I do not regard your analogy as "offensive" because it has simply no basis in fact. We believe that the leading role of the working class is of benefit to the whole community, "nationally" (if you like) and internationally—to the intellectuals, peasants, artisans, and so on—and Gramsci's word for this role was "hegemony". . . .

—. . . meaning?

LOMBARDO RADICE: . . . meaning constructive leadership in the spirit of revolution but deepening the concept of revolution. It means that Marx's prescription for overthrowing capitalist society by revolution is adequately met by the leading role of the working class. It does not require us to go on to the barricades.

—There are, as I see it, two charismatic ideas in our time: Socialism and Nationalism. The combination of the two is potent stuff indeed. The Italian Communist Party has, in the course of time, come to see this—not in the sense of "national socialism", but on the perfectly respectable calculation that in the sophisticated and freedom-loving context of Italian society the libertarian content of Italian socialism must imply independence from foreign models, foreign inspiration, foreign control.

LOMBARDO RADICE: Socialism is a charismatic idea, and so is freedom; and it is the combination of socialism with *liberty* (not Nationalism) that is the potent mixture you refer to. Nationalism is a spent force. We are fighting for the hegemony of the working class because the interests and historical consciousness of the working class coincide with the universal interests of mankind. There was, of course, a time when the Italian

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proletariat, too, was narrow-minded and parochial. Gramsci himself had to remind the Turin workers that it was their duty to stand up for the interests of Sicilian peasants—it didn't come naturally to them. But those days are behind us.

—What precisely does Gramsci's idea of "hegemony" mean in Italian practice? The dictionary definition of the word is ambivalent. It may mean simply "leadership", but it may, and very much does in current usage, also mean "predominance" or "rule" of one state over another, or one group over another.

LOMBARDO RADICE: Hegemony means that the general problems of society (whether political, economic, or cultural) can only be solved if the proletariat obtains the leadership of society—not in order to dictate to society, but to head it. And this leadership is exercised in the framework of an "historical bloc" (to use Gramsci's phrase) in which the interests of the three main strata of society—workers, peasants and intellectuals—are fully represented.

—Would political parties be included in this front?

LOMBARDO RADICE: The Italian Communist Party's view is that today such an "historical bloc" requires several truly independent parties. Possibly Gramsci did not envisage more than one party, but this isn't important for us today.

—But if and when you have achieved "hegemony" in Italy, would you be willing to renounce it if the Italian people decided that it wanted no more of it?

LOMBARDO RADICE: I told you before: once we accept the rules of the game and come to power through the ballot box, we are committed to respecting those rules, whether they benefit us or no. We cannot have one yardstick before we come to power and another while in power.

—You would be willing to resign, peacefully accepting defeat through the normal democratic process?

LOMBARDO RADICE: I think we would if we lost the support of the people.

—But earlier you said: it would be an impossible hypothesis to suppose that a society which has reached a higher stage of development in the form of socialism would want to go back to a "lower form of development"—to Helmut Schmidt's Social Democracy, for example. Wouldn't the same apply to Italian society once the "hegemony" of the proletariat has been established through the offices of your party?

LOMBARDO RADICE: I'm no prophet; but once the working class has acquired hegemony and led Italian society out of its almost permanent crisis, it would be difficult to envisage anyone wanting a regression from a better state of society to a worse state.

—But should such an unreasonable view assert itself through the political process, would you bow to it?

LOMBARDO RADICE: It is in the logic of our policy that we would.

"ITALY IS truly prey to demoniacal spirits, impossible to control or comprehend: the sole principle of order is to be found in the working class, in the proletarian will to inscribe Italy concretely and actively in the world historical process. The principle of order can only express itself politically in a rigidly organised Communist Party, which sets itself a clear, unambiguous objective. . . ."

These words were written, not by one of your colleagues in the Italian Communist Party's leadership in 1955 or 1977, but by Antonio Gramsci in 1920. Having listened to you for two extremely stimulating mornings, I am inclined to concede that the continuity you have impressed on me in this conversation truly exists. 57 years after Gramsci, the "demoniacal spirits" of Italy have still not departed and—unless I am gravely deceived—the Italian Communist Party has yet to be "rigidly organised" and set itself those "clear and unambiguous objectives" which Gramsci demanded. I don't myself think the Party is a "principle of order" which will lead Italy out of chaos. Much rather is it part of the chaos itself. And that, I must confess, tempers some of my gloomier forebodings about the future of Italian democracy.

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Daniel Jones

Overmilk'd Wood

The Myth of Dylan Thomas

THE MYTH of Dylan Thomas was born when the man, Dylan, died. But labour pains made themselves felt just before that birth. While Dylan lay in a coma, as soon as it became fairly clear that he would not survive, that is, when there was little danger that the living man would disconcertingly turn up somewhere to confront people and bear witness to the truth about himself, those who cared not a hoot for him, who barred him their homes, offered him no help, no money, looked upon him as a dishonest, drunken waster, began to wring their hands and cry to the heavens, "A Genius is taking his leave of us!" Under different circumstances, the situation would have had its comic side, as in a scene from Jonson or Molière.

Some people, of course, enjoy grief; there are some, too, who take pleasure in observing the grief of others. One of this kind troubled to walk all the way from the centre of Swansea up the precipitous slope of Constitution Hill to call on me at Rosehill Terrace, where I then lived, in order to get me alone with himself in a room and announce, while concentrating his gaze on my face, and especially my eyes, "Dylan Thomas is ill, very ill, probably dying." I kept my face absolutely motionless, without a twitch, and, I hope, there wasn't even a flicker in my eyes. I hardly knew the self-appointed messenger, and saw to it that he gained no satisfaction for his pains. But he was only the first of a long series that was to extend far into future years, the series of uninvited visitors who called on Dylan's account.

In the week before Dylan's illness, a local newspaper had published an article that tore his works to pieces and consigned them and him to the ash-heap. Immediately after his death, that is, within a fortnight of the previous issue, the same paper printed an article praising Dylan's work to the skies; a Homer, a Shakespeare, a Goethe all rolled into one had been lost to us. Even more extravagant were the references to Dylan as a person; for example, he was described as "one of Nature's gentlemen." *One of Nature's gentlemen!* That was exceptionally rich. The mythologising had begun.

AT FIRST I DID NOT REALISE what was happening. The Estate consisted solely of debts; my mind was occupied with my duties as Literary Trustee and with anxiety about the welfare of the Thomas family. At the same time, all who were closely concerned with Dylan, his work and his family, seemed to suffer in varying degrees from a kind of hysteria. I myself was not excluded from this. In spite of my outward calmness and artificial, newly-acquired business-like air, I was really in as unstable a condition as many of the most hysterical around me. This showed itself in various forms of exaggeration: excessive punctiliousness in the execution of what I considered my duties, jealousy in the preservation of texts, suspicion of others, and irritability in my relations with them. I was suddenly plunged into an environment unfamiliar to me, the environment of broadcast drama and the theatre; it would not be too much to say that at one period I quarrelled with all around me on the slightest cause, not realising that they too were suffering from nerves and were really exercising some restraint in dealing with me.

Gradually the public was drawn into an awareness of tragedy, need, and work to be perpetuated. Funds were organised, both here and across the Atlantic; quite quickly the necessary money was accumulated. But symptoms of the growth of a myth accompanied all this activity. It was seriously proposed that the money accumulated by one Fund should go to the erection of a colossal statue of the poet on a Welsh cliff looking out over the sea. Memorial

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readings and performances blossomed all over London, the actors giving their services with the generosity characteristic of their profession; people declaimed "And death shall have no dominion" at the Dominion Theatre. Everyone was asking: "But what was *he* like?" The infant Dylan myth was well nurtured by the remarks, comments and hints of those who did not know the answer.

I can dismiss my own part in this with a few words. My work as Literary Trustee, which was of course unpaid, proved to be heavy and time-consuming. The correspondence ranged through all degrees from the imbecilic to the penetrating. Everything had to be answered, but the serious correspondence took up most energy and time. Some queries demanded careful thought and investigation, followed by the laborious composition of answers that might occupy several hours. There was no time for my own work, and in any case I had no thought or energy to spare for it. At the end of two years my own family was almost in as great need as the Thomas family had been at the time of Dylan's death. The Thomas Estate, on the contrary, was now like a ship well-launched and sailing always faster before a freshening wind. It was time for me to resign, and I did.

THIS RESIGNATION, which I thought would mark the end of persecution, was only its beginning. I expected a continuation of correspondence, and now I simply passed most of it on to the right quarter. But there remained some correspondence addressed to me personally, not as a trustee, and it was for me to deal with it, or ignore it. The postage stamp usually showed the head of George Washington, and the contents varied from queries about Dylan's personal hygiene to questions about his knowledge of the *Rig Veda*. Sometimes the academic aims of the writer were mentioned, an M.A. or a Ph.D., perhaps. Sometimes the writer left it entirely to me what I replied about Dylan Thomas: anything, anything. I remember particularly an American lady whom I neglected right up to the end. In despair, she took to sending me drawings. Her last drawing was on a postcard: it was of a Hecuba-like woman, kneeling, with dishevelled hair, hands and eyes upraised imploringly, with tears pouring down her cheeks to collect in a pool around her knees; underneath, in large capitals were printed the words: "ANYTHING IN WRITING ABOUT DYLAN THOMAS! I BEG! I IMPLORE!" This appeal melted even my stony heart, and I sent her a card congratulating her on her draughtsmanship, which, after all, was good.

Then the unannounced visits to my house began. It was assumed that I would be delighted to discuss Dylan Thomas, the man and his work, but particularly the man, for hours on end with perfect strangers at any time of the day or night, casting my own work or leisure on one side. Late one evening, for example, I was sitting in warmth and comfort with my feet up thoroughly enjoying some rubbish on television, when the doorbell rang. Opening the door, I found a group of strangers crowded together in the porch and even on the threshold. There seemed to be lots of them; those at the back craned their necks and stood on tiptoe, and all gawked. Eventually the leader spoke. "We're from Blanksville, on our way to Laugharne, and thought we'd drop in for a chat about Dylan Thomas."

On another occasion I was returning to the house from a walk, "thinking of nothing much", when I was treated to a surprise. I was reminded of a time when, on turning the corner of a country lane, I came suddenly upon a five-barred gate which was being used as a perch by about twenty turkeys; they all stared at me without moving, fixedly, meaninglessly. Now, the approach to my door consists of a winding series of wide, deep steps. Turning in at the gate, I was suddenly confronted with about twenty people sitting on these steps, at different heights and angles; all motionless, and all staring at me as if they were gazing into the infinite vacuity of space beyond the furthest galaxies. At length the withered brown dewlap of one of them quivered, and the syllables grated slowly out: "Die. . . lan Thom. . . as. . . ." No light came into the eyes, but perhaps the vacuum into which they gazed was not a vacuum at all; perhaps there gleamed in it here and there the mirage of a Ph.D. diploma.

To describe the innumerable similar visits I was privileged to receive would tire you almost as much as they tired me. But first I must remove the danger of a possible misunderstanding. It is true that about three-quarters of the visitors I have described were American, while other nationalities made up the remaining quarter. In spite of this, and in spite of much provocation, I feel no resentment towards intruders on the grounds of their nationality alone; that would be silly. Many Americans come to this country every year for various reasons, when they can

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afford or have facilities to do so; though numbering thousands, they constitute a very small proportion of their population. Of this small proportion only a still smaller proportion takes the trouble to intrude on my privacy, and I must remind myself that some of these, merely brash and insolent to all appearances, are really acting in a spirit of childlike simplicity, quite unaware of the extreme annoyance and inconvenience they cause. On such small grounds, it would be quite illogical to harbour any resentment against Americans as a whole.

I learned fairly quickly not to admit my uninvited visitors into the house. In the first place, admission involved a much greater waste of time. But there was another reason for my lack of hospitality, a sinister one; I hasten to say that this does not apply to Americans. Very often the visitors were shown into the front room and left alone there until I joined them from my study upstairs. In this front room, a fairly large one, I kept the bulk of what I think of as my third library. After a time I noticed that certain books were missing, particularly from the Dylan Thomas section. Many of them were, of course, first editions, and others rare and probably valuable. Twenty years before, in the days of my wonderful first library, this would have broken my heart, but the painful loss of that library, through friendly rather than enemy action, had taught me a kind of stoicism. My only regret was the disappearance of the first printing of *Llareggub*, in Botteghe Oscure, volume XIII, and even then my regret was more than half due to the fact that I knew with absolute certainty who took it.

UNFORTUNATELY, almost every house contains a very useful gadget that can be used as a means of access by an intruder, even when doors are bolted and barred: the telephone. I give two examples of typical phone calls; they should be enough.

One:—Ring. "Daniel Jones?" "Yes; who is it?" "You wouldn't know me but. . . ." "Let's come to the point. What do you want to know about Dylan Thomas?" "Well, I thought we could have a get-together, in a pub perhaps, for a little chat about him; you like a drink, I expect (*hearty laugh*). I'm not a Drinking Man myself, but the drinks would be on me. . . ." Click. Ring. "Sorry. We were cut off. I. . . ." "Yes, I know we were. *I* cut us off, like this. . . ." Click.

Two:—(To appreciate the richness of the following one-sided conversation, it must be explained that I live in a part of Swansea a good five miles from the centre of the city, where The Dragon Hotel stands.) Ring. American lady, breathless but business-like: "Daniel Jones? I'm on my way to Laugharne and am at The Dragon. I can fit you in half-an-hour to talk about Dylan Thomas if you come at once. Time's a-wastin'." Click (*my* click).

Outside the house, of course, I am easy prey. Sometimes I have a genuine desire not to displease; for example, a friend might buttonhole me and say, "I have an American girl staying with me, charming girl; she's dying to meet you to talk about Dylan Thomas; I'll bring her along." What answer can I give, since this is a friend who is speaking?

Some circuitous approaches are very amusing; they are of different types. One of the most subtle is through music. "You don't know me, but may I congratulate you on your last broadcast? Most interesting; I'd like to discuss it with you. I have a few friends with me, if you wouldn't mind joining us for a minute. This is X, this Y, this Z. Yes, what was I saying? Oh, congratulations. . . ." The congratulations die away to silence, and I begin counting inwardly, "One, two, three, four. . . ." About the count of eight, it comes: "I understand you were a great friend of Dylan Thomas."

Another approach is through the "Old School." "Hello." "Hello." I look up and see someone who might or might not be a stranger, with a face that could be anybody's. There seem to be some dark figures behind him, about three feet away. "You remember me, of course: Ianto ap Edwards, of 3A" (3A was the class of at least a thousand pupils, one of whom was Dylan). "Grunt." "You see, you see", Ianto turns to his companions, "I told you he'd know me." The cronies creep nearer. "You remember when we used to go to the pub: Ifor, *Dylan*, you, Gwilym, *Dylan*, Maldwyn, *Dylan* and I. . . . what a laugh!" To the cronies, who are now crowding round: "You see! I told you!"

Such experiences are strange enough, but the most extraordinary occasions have been those when I have heard accounts of episodes I know are true, because Dylan and I were the chief protagonists in them, the only difference being that the chief protagonists have now become Dylan and the narrator.

My reactions at such times have given me the reputation of a crosspatch, a kodiak with a

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megrim; and I must confess that my atrabilious night-thoughts sometimes run along the lines: "Was it worth it? Any of it?" Without clarifying what this self-searching may imply, I will simply say that the light of dawn always brings me to the sane conclusion, "Yes, it *was* worth it."

But I was not always surly with people who approached me about Dylan Thomas. To tell the truth, my curiosity about the myth began to be aroused to such an extent that it sometimes overcame my irritation. In a pub one evening, a stranger sat next to me and began without introduction to ply me with questions about Dylan. I answered every one of them politely and as well as I could. He then got up and prepared to take his leave, not without saying, "Thanks; I've enjoyed our chat." But I caught hold of him by the sleeve and made him sit down again. "The conversation has been too one-sided. You've asked questions and I've replied. Would you mind answering some questions of mine?" "Well, fair enough, I suppose." "Which is your favourite Dylan Thomas poem?" Silence. A dim look came into his eyes, not, I'm afraid, the look of one who with painful difficulty weighs the merits of one of many choices against another. A horrible suspicion arose in my mind. "Have you read *any* of his poetry?" "Well, poetry's not much in my line." "Prose, then. You know: 'Nicole, bring me my slippers and give me my nightcap.' That's prose." "Sounds pretty queer to me." "It was written by a Frenchman. You have to make allowances. Well?" "Not that, either. But they say he was wonderful on the radio and made some great discs. Our local society's always doing his stuff." "Ah, you've heard them, attended the readings?" "No. But they say this Thomas was a great lad. A real Bohemian. Went about in rags, always drunk, spewed blood, heaps of women (*nudge*), died young, of drink, in a hotel in New York I think. He was famous. Why, in our town we have a street called Dylan Villas, and a caff called The Dylan Waffle, where you can get an Under-milk-shake, which is one of his writings, you know."

This occasion, I must admit, marks one abysmal extreme. I was luckier on other occasions; when, for example, in answer to the question about Dylan's poetry, my new-found acquaintance exclaimed with some indignation, "Of course! I can even quote a line. Let me see. 'And death shall have no dominion.' Or is that from the Bible, like 'The mills of God'?"

I HAVE THOUGHT a great deal about the Dylan myth; at its worst, as my investigations seemed to suggest, it has little to do with his work, and not even very much to do with him as he really was. Romanticising and mythologising have much in common; but they are different. The first emphasises exaggeration, the second distortion. The murderer Heath used to write in hotel registers, "Group Captain Rupert Brooke"; no one, however unstable, would think of adopting as his signature "Vice-Marshal Dylan Thomas." The less historical fact available, the better both romanticising and mythologising can flourish; there is all the more manoeuvring space for the first to exaggerate and for the second to distort. Brooke, whose insipid verse leaves the impression of an indeterminate character, was known in school-books and associated with the '14–'18 War, during which he died, not in action, but of a mysterious infection aboard a ship off Skyros. This left plenty of scope for the romantic. Wilfred Owen, whose verse, perhaps the greatest anti-war poetry ever written, leaves a strong personal impression, died in action a few days before the end of the '14–'18 War while heroically trying to lead his men across a canal. All this is too precise. Then there is the aura that seems to surround some names, for example T. E. Lawrence, inviting exaggeration and distortion, while the same aura is not to be found about the figures of Hopkins, Yeats, Joyce, Eliot; informed study of the texts has given no opportunity for the aura to take shape.

Of course, I am not competent to discuss theories about the creation of gods and their myths, but, like any general reader, I get the impression that the animist Müller-Frazer theory has predominated for many years. However, I do happen to know that there is another theory, put forward by Lyall and Ridgeway, that challenges it.[1] Not always, but sometimes, they suggest, the cause is to be found not in symbolism of natural processes, but in lives of real men and women who have performed remarkable deeds in the past. People remember these deeds inaccurately, and, as time goes on, are apt to supplement them with inventions often prompted unconsciously by personal desires. This process is quite natural in a society with few or no historical records; in other words,

[1] William Ridgeway, *The Dramas and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races* (1915).

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historical accuracy has an effect directly contrary to mythologising. At the same time, awe and dread must surround the legend, in order to give it religious force; for example, the hero, like young Adonis, must meet death before his time, and tragically. "'Twas only fear first in the world made gods."

It is clear that all the conditions most favourable for mythologising are present in the "mystery" of Dylan's reputed character, life, and death. There is plenty of room for manoeuvre here. Out of this imaginary clay anything can be made to the desire of the moulder: a Bacchanalian, an Evangelist, an inspired madman, a martyr, a reincarnation of the Celtic past. The ungodlike word "Thomas" has disappeared from "Dylan Thomas" for a long time now in the Welsh press; as plain "Dylan", resonant, but with a hint of intimacy, the word evokes all the ancient solemnity and rites of the Gorsedd, to which the real Dylan never belonged. According to legend, his appearance, even on the most casual occasions, only thinly veiled the arcane workings of creativity. A nincompoop once described to me his only meeting with Dylan: "He allowed me to do all the talking. Leaning with one elbow on the bar counter, he raised his eyes to the ceiling; they were slightly glazed, and I knew that, undisturbed by my words, genius was even then at work in him." I did not mention in reply that I knew well what that glazed look meant; it meant, "How much can I 'touch' this bloody bore for?"

But the most striking examples of "moulding to the heart's desire" are to be found in the posthumous portraits. It is perhaps my bad luck that I have seen not one that resembles the original. There are two main types. In the first, based on photographs, the receding hair is brought forward, the forehead by way of compensation heightened, lips and nostrils narrowed, arms rounded, body unsexed, and fingers tapered as a musician's are supposed to be (but aren't). The second, based somehow on the poetry, creates a more rarefied impression; in the murk one can eventually make out a darker gibbosity pierced by a couple of bilious spots: this is Dylan by owl-light, and it has, I am sure, much symbolic significance.[2]

[2] The best portrait of Dylan is a very fine picture by Alfred Janes in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff; it was painted during Dylan's lifetime, when he was about eighteen years old.

IN THE CONTEXT of the Dylan legend the controversial subject of his influence cannot, of course, be avoided. As I see it, this influence has three aspects: encouragement to write, imitation of style, and partial occultation of the "artistic scene."

Dylan was for a time a reporter on a provincial paper. How many reporters on provincial papers have imagined themselves to be corporals with batons hidden in their scratch-pads? How many junior announcers have dropped their voices a major sixth? All of them, reporters and announcers, thinking to themselves, of course: "If Dylan could 'make it' why can't I?"

In my opinion, and as far as I know, the influence of Dylan on his imitators has been uniformly bad. Of course, many artists, fine in themselves, have exercised a bad influence. Murillo, Victor Hugo and Wagner, for example, are "acknowledged masters"; but the direct action of their work, as opposed to the reaction against it, has resulted in achievements of dubious quality. It is a trite observation, but it must be said that the essence that confers their status on such artists cannot be reproduced, while everything that is marginal, the mannerisms and superficies of style, can be imitated. The more strongly flavoured the style, the easier the imitation.

Here I am on dangerous ground. I have undertaken to make no direct comment on Dylan's work. But within these self-imposed limits, I can still say this: Maupassant, for example, is a writer very difficult, if not quite impossible, to imitate; Dylan was not a writer of this type; in fact, he was different in the extreme. A multiplicity of adjectives is a characteristic of his imaginative prose style, and this is one of the respects in which he has had too many imitators. Sometimes I wish that there hung on the walls of every broadcasting studio and newspaper office in Wales Flaubert's warning: "The adjective is the enemy of the noun." Whole shiploads of potential writers have sunk into oblivion beneath the waves of Dylan's "style" (that is, marginal characteristics), with the result that the question has been asked, and asked seriously: "Has Dylan Thomas ruined Anglo-Welsh literature?" My answer to this would be "No", because there are still many writers who have stood firm against the Influence. Where are they? Who are they? This brings me to my third point.

I ask the reader to imagine himself at the theatre seated behind a very fat lady, wearing a very large hat, who keeps talking very loudly.

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He can be only vaguely aware that there is some activity on the stage; only a confused sound of voices comes to him. The lady represents Dylan's work and his myth, the stage, the place where other Welsh artists persevere in their work, artists who have the ability and the originality to maintain independence at the cost of comparative neglect. For this occultation of Welsh art by his work and his myth, Dylan himself, of course, is in no way to blame, any more than those on the stage are responsible for the presence of the fat lady. It would be Dylan's hope and the "actors'" hope that the theatre-goer has the sense simply to change his seat and view things from a different angle.

Much I have said is controversial, but none of it is intentionally provocative. Two points must be made clear: the limits of the reading, or non-reading public for whom my remarks are intended and the reason why I think those remarks, derogatory and ironical as some of them are, are necessary.

Wherever English is spoken, and in some places where it is not, Dylan's work has its following of admirers. They value it with sanity and discrimination. Their critical faculty is not asleep, and faults are not overlooked; their appreciation, when it is aroused, is genuine and significant. They show no tendency to surround with a mystic aura either the man or his work. These, of course, are the readers whose opinions Dylan himself would prize. Perhaps I owe an apology to them, and should explain that my tetchy sallies have not been aimed in their direction. At the same time, I have felt it necessary to write as I have, even at the risk of being misunderstood.

IT IS NOT IRRELEVANT to mention here a BBC script I wrote many years ago, called "Handel versus Handelianism"; I well recall the trouble it caused. Dismayed by the ill-treatment of a few well-known works of this composer, and outraged by the neglect of others, I took it upon myself to defend the great man from his "cult." After the broadcast, my post-bag was heavy. One correspondent wrote to this effect: "You decry Handel. Beethoven admired him. Whose opinion should we value, yours or Beethoven's?" This came from someone who had at least listened to the broadcast; in my script I had mentioned Beethoven's admiration for Handel, and I am fairly sure that the writer would not otherwise have known about it. In the rest of my correspondence there was a general agreement, apparently based on hearsay, that I had actually attacked Handel's music; implicit in this assumption was probably the idea that a contemporary composer could take up no other position.

I have tried to defend Dylan against Dylanism and to avoid, if possible, the kind of misunderstanding I have just described. My aim was to remove foolish adulation from the writings and foolish mythologising from the writer. I had to lay the ghost to raise up the man; this would have Dylan's approval, I think. Dylan did not like himself very much; he would have liked his myth even less. Least of all, he would have liked his influence.

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Slugs

seem not to move
but do

seem not to have
the guts to mate

(yet deep grass
finds them glued, oozy)

seem lifeless
but for the way they cling

like drying tar
to anything that touches . . .

leeches, black armbands
stigmas, liabilities

never very far away
from blood

Geoffrey Holloway

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Jean Monnet's Europe & After

Of Dreams and Realities—By MAX BELOFF

WHAT history will make of Jean Monnet will depend on what happens in the future. If there is to be a genuinely united Europe, he will rank with the forgers of nations: Cavour, Bismarck. If, as seems all too possible, the centrifugal forces prove too strong, and the consequences are one form or another of authoritarian tyranny and impoverishment, he will be remembered if at all as a prophetic voice in the wilderness.

Meanwhile his memoirs[1] provide an unusual angle on the history of our own age and a valuable restatement of Monnet's own political philosophy and of his mode of operation. He remains of course a highly controversial figure—in France where he represents a current antithetical to Gaullism[2]—and even it seems in England. How else explain the highly unfavourable review of the book by Professor Douglas Johnson in the *Times Literary Supplement*?[3] But while one may well disagree with Monnet's views and feel that so intensely personal a vision may distort reality, the importance of the work is difficult to overestimate.

To younger men, Monnet is of course known almost exclusively for his role in the making of the European Communities. Yet this phase of his life's work began only in 1947–8 when he was already sixty years old with the equivalent of several careers behind him—in business, as an international and national civil servant, and above all as a creator of those bridges between men and interests that form the true substance of politics. One might say that Monnet has been the most important political figure of the present century who never, even formally, submitted himself to the electoral process. In part this was due to a correct recognition of where his true talents lay—he has never been an orator—and in part as to his decisions on how best to tackle the various tasks he has set himself: "*Je n'ai aucun goût pour l'ombre quoiqu'on en dise, mais c'est au prix de l'effacement que je peux le mieux faire aboûtir les choses, alors je choisis l'ombre.*"

BUT THE PARADOXICAL NATURE of Monnet's career is not to be found in this aspect of it alone. For his importance is not only that of a skilful operator but of a doctrinaire. The political theory of which the European Communities were imperfect embodiments is regarded by Monnet (and perhaps correctly) as of more abiding importance than the forms of organisation to which it has so far given rise. (It is also a theory which, as its author now restates it, is quite different from its fashionable interpretations which we owe largely to American political scientists—but to that point I shall return.)

Yet the doctrinaire or theoretician, the dealer in abstractions, was also someone whose whole preparation for his tasks was in the world of action. Monnet's formal schooling (unlike that of those of his associates nearly all of whom were to be the product of the most advanced academic or professional education that their countries had to offer) ended at his own wish at the age of sixteen when he entered the family cognac business: "*A seize ans j'achetai un chapeau melon*

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[1] *Mémoires*. By JEAN MONNET. Fayard, F.59, £7.90.

[2] Cf. J. B. Duroselle, "General de Gaulle's Europe and Jean Monnet's Europe", *World Today* (January 1966).

[3] Douglas Johnson, "A Certain Idea of Europe", *Times Literary Supplement* (10 December 1976).

What Professor Johnson seems to object to most is Monnet's "high idea of his own intelligence and importance." My own view would be that far from showing any undue egocentricity, Monnet's most obvious weakness is that he is too kind to others. While many of his co-workers were clearly remarkable, too many perfectly respectable geese do come out as swans. The only harsh words are those in which he comments on Joseph Avenol, the second Secretary-General of the League of Nations, and then he does not elaborate them.

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et eus conscience de mes responsabilités." Now that (free) higher education has been elevated to the status of one of the rights of man—and Monnet himself regarded its extension as a very important part of the "modernisation" of France—it is worth noting that in the pre-1914 world at least, it was possible to make one's way without it; that practice can bring rewards not only in achievement but in fruitful reflection upon its lessons. Social innovation does not depend upon social science.

As is suitable, however, for someone who himself gives so high a place to action, Monnet in fact begins his memoirs *in medias res* with an account of the abortive Anglo-French Union project of June 1940 which he still regards as a lost opportunity. His account of the composition, submission and rejection of this document contains little that is new—though much seems to have been new to Professor Johnson who challenges it as being excessively egocentric and in some respects misleading.[4]

It is in fact well established that it was Monnet who persuaded Neville Chamberlain through the good offices of Sir Horace Wilson to bring the idea of such a union before the cabinet and was indeed its principal projector.[5] Professor Johnson disputes his claim that the project so submitted was the work of Jean Monnet and "his old friend Arthur Salter" because Monnet fails to make it plain that "many similar ideas of unity or federation were in the air at the time." Professor Johnson refers in particular to a memorandum circulated by Leo Amery to a number of fellow ministers recommending "a real unity of France and Great Britain, dramatically expressed and fully realised by the two peoples." Professor Johnson here obviously relies upon Mr Harold Macmillan's account of a dinner at the Reform Club on the evening of 15 June at which the idea received unanimous support.[6]

Unfortunately, Professor Johnson is doubly misled. In the first place, the Amery document (dated 14 June 1940) does not contain any of the aspects of organic union that were discussed by the Cabinet on the basis of the papers presented to it on the 15th and 16th.[7] Unity was to be expressed through a dramatic declaration:

> "that in the whole conduct of the war the two Governments are acting as one through a joint Cabinet. There could be a joint meeting of the Parliaments, or of a specially formed Parliament, composed of delegations from both."

Nothing about common citizenship or permanent common institutions.[8]

In the second place, we have an undated letter from Leo Amery to Robert Vansittart enclosing another copy of the same document which he himself describes as a revised version of Jean Monnet's draft declaration. Amery feared that Monnet would think his draft too weak, but in his view "the idea of absolutely unified government and citizenship" would not appeal in either France or England. In fact, the Amery document itself, so far from representing a separate initiative from Monnet's, clearly emanated from the same set of discussions going on between British and French personalities in London in those hectic days. It was presumably the undiluted version which reached Churchill (from Pleven *via* Margesson) on the evening of the 14th, and was then largely forgotten by Churchill as he concentrated on the questions of a separate French armistice and the future of the French fleet.[9]

It was clearly the undiluted version that was considered by ministers at the end of the cabinet meeting on the morning of 15 January, and there is no reason to doubt Monnet's version that it had been put into final shape by Vansittart, Desmond Morton, Salter, Pleven, and Monnet himself.[10] The same project was put to the cabinet itself on the morning of the 16th, while it was a new version prepared by Vansittart and Morton during the night of 15th–16th and shown to Monnet, Pleven, and de Gaulle on the following morning, that was presented to Churchill

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[4] When studying the Anglo-French project myself some years ago, I sought M. Monnet's help; but he preferred to keep his account for his own memoirs. He did, however, help the late David Thomson with his lecture on the subject. See M. Beloff, "The Anglo-French Union Project of June 1940", *Etudes d'Histoire des Relations Internationales: Mélanges Pierre Renouvin* (Paris, 1966), reprinted in *Intellectual in Politics* (London, 1970); David Thomson, *The Proposal for Anglo-French Union in 1940* (Oxford 1966). Dr Thomson had also used the account by Monnet's close associate at the time, René Pleven, written as early as 22 June 1940, which had appeared in J. R. Tournoux, *Pétain et de Gaulle* (Paris, Plon, 1964), pp. 426–441.

[5] It is true that Chamberlain was not "Lord Chancellor" and that Wilson was not at that moment his "*chef de cabinet*"; but Monsieur Monnet is not very good on British nomenclature or spelling.

[6] For evidence of Foreign Office interest in such ideas as early as March, see *The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey* (ed. John Harvey, 1970), pp. 342–6; Harold Macmillan, *The Blast of War* (1967), p. 196.

[7] See Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War* (Vol. I, 1970), pp. 272–282. (This replaces the account in the summary volume of the series published in 1962 which was all that Dr Thomson and I had available when we wrote our accounts.)

[8] I am indebted to Mr Harold Macmillan for letting me have a copy of the Amery document as preserved in his own archives.

[9] See the extracts from his diary in John Colville, *Footprints in Time* (1975), pp. 85–7.

[10] "After, Neville brought up a proposal which he didn't think much of (nor I) for fusion of British and French governments." D. Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan* (1971), p. 299.

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at lunch on the 16th and that formed the basis of the actual offer telephoned to Reynaud that afternoon.[11]

IN THE LIGHT OF THE MEETING that morning between the British and French protagonists of the Union project, it is difficult to see why Professor Johnson should dispute Jean Monnet's claim to have called attention to the discrepancy between sending a telegram to Bordeaux on the morning of the 16th, assenting to Reynaud seeking for a separate armistice subject to certain safeguards, and the contrary project of creating a close Anglo-French Union to continue the war. Nor does any evidence from any source contradict Monnet's account of the close cooperation between himself and de Gaulle both as to the nature of the proposed joint declaration, or as to its use in bolstering the will of the French to resist.

HAVING DEALT WITH THIS EPISODE, Monnet then goes back to the beginning, to his childhood in the Charente and to his early apprenticeship to business which included long stays in both Canada and the USA. We then come to what is, to my mind, the most puzzling of all the biographical elements in the book, the way in which Monnet, still only twenty-six years old but unfit for active service, managed to get himself appointed to one of the French economic missions to London in November 1914, already more conscious (as he tells us) of the need for a much closer integration of the Allied war effort than was true of the vast majority of people on either side of the channel. As was to be the case so often, Monnet began at the top, on this occasion with an introduction to the French Premier Viviani from which the rest followed. Did Viviani spot a winner, or did he just fob off an applicant with good local political backing with a job that happened to be available?

His assignments in London which lasted for the duration of the war ended up with his partnership with Arthur Salter in charge of all the Allies' shipping resources (the key to economic control in the final stages of the war and in the Armistice period).

From Monnet's point of view the rapid dismantling of the machinery of inter-Allied cooperation was the first setback to the notion underlying his thinking henceforward, that of the inability of the 19th-century Nation-State to meet the needs of the new era and the necessity for creating larger units particularly in Europe. His hope was that the League of Nations would prove a step in this direction; and although this hope was in turn disappointed, his experience in the League secretariat in its active and formative early years contributed a good deal to his developing views as to how such developments might be encouraged: "*Avec le recul je comprends mieux ce qu'il y avait de supranational avant la lettre dans la Société des Nations; c'était l'entente profonde au sien du secrétariat entre des hommes qui disposaient chacun dans son pays de réseaux d'influence tels que l'intérêt général pénétrât les centres de décision nationaux.*"

It is from the working out of common problems from a point of view distinct from that of the individual nations involved, and from the personal links that such pooled endeavours create, that the supra-national element emerges. Because (among other things) no such element existed in the United Nations from the very beginning, Monnet was never among those who saw in that organisation an important hope for the future. It was to the League that he looked back, both positively and negatively, seeing in the weaknesses of the Saar statute of 1922 one of the distant origins of the European Coal and Steel Community.

By 1923, much of the League's productive work had been done and Monnet returned for a time to rescue the family business, then in the doldrums: it was a return from what his father called "*Les affaires des autres*" (*i.e.* public life) to private business. This experience may also have left its mark, since a considerable degree of innovation was required to meet the new conditions of the world market in the face of Monnet's father's profoundest convictions expressed in the phrase, "*toute idée nouvelle est une mauvaise idée.*"

Monnet himself both believed in creative innovation and was aware of the fact that it is only under conditions of extreme urgency that men can bring themselves to contemplate its implications: "*les hommes n'acceptent le changement que dans la nécessité et ils voient la nécessité que dans la crise. . . .*" From the mid-20s to the mid-30s Monnet remained in private business, switching from cognac to banking and living for extended periods in the United States and in China. From the public point of view these were fallow years—China he came to admire without professing to understand it, though the experience may have helped to fortify his belief that the true units of history (and so, of action) are civilisations in an almost Toynbeean sense. What these years did do was to extend enormously his range of contacts in the world of international business and international journalism as well as

[11] Thomson, *The Proposal for Anglo-French Union*, p. 7. This account was confirmed to me by the late Sir Desmond Morton (in a letter of 2 February 1966).

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in government, all of which were to serve his purposes when he returned to the public scene and also, no doubt, to give him the financial security which was to enable him to choose his subsequent roles without worrying too much about what his salary might be or who would foot the bill for his office and travelling expenses.

FROM 1938 OR EVEN EARLIER, the reality of the Nazi threat renewed the validity of the Allied experiences of the First World War and made it desirable that some of the errors then made should not be repeated. Monnet became involved in the problems of French re-armament particularly in respect of purchases from the United States and, after the outbreak of war, in the machinery of Anglo-French cooperation out of which in the crisis of June 1940 there emerged the project of an organic union between Britain and France. When that project collapsed in the defeatist atmosphere of Bordeaux, Monnet was—like other Frenchmen determined to continue the fight—obliged to settle upon the form it might take.

Professor Johnson takes Monnet to task for illogically refusing to serve under de Gaulle on the ground that de Gaulle was bound to be regarded as too beholden to the British to serve as the focus for French renewal, while himself going off to the United States to assist the British government in securing economic and military aid. This judgment is a superficial one and does not fully meet the case as Monnet himself puts it. What de Gaulle should have done, according to Monnet's view, was to limit his original appeal to those who had emerged from metropolitan France and wait a little longer to see whether the imperial proconsuls such as Noguès might be willing to take over the leadership of a further struggle waged from Africa. By insisting on taking the lead himself from his relatively junior position, de Gaulle (in Monnet's view) helped to push Noguès and the others into an acceptance of the Armistice and Vichy. Monnet may have been wrong; but it is not certain that he was wrong.

Furthermore, Professor Johnson seems to underestimate the importance of the struggle for transatlantic supply, Lend-lease, the "victory programme", and all the other elements in the shifting of the weight of the anti-Hitler coalition on to American shoulders. As I have tried to point out (*Times Literary Supplement*, 24 December 1976), his whole understanding of the way in which the War was won seems curiously unreal. Nor is it true as he asserts that Monnet neglects mention of the Resistance. Indeed when he came to join Giraud and de Gaulle in Algiers (and to play a not inconsiderable role in the creation of the French provisional government and its ultimate recognition), his understanding of the position that de Gaulle had by then acquired was much superior to that of his American friends, including President Roosevelt himself: "*A mes yeux, de Gaulle est l'homme qui apporte l'esprit de la Résistance métropolitaine, enfin unie et rangée dans son immense majorité derrière lui. Sa place est bien là où se reconstituent les pouvoirs de la République.*"

It seems clear that de Gaulle himself cherished no rancour in respect of Jean Monnet's decision in 1940. Given de Gaulle's passionate belief that only nations are real and his strong antipathy to any supra-national machinery particularly when patronised by the Americans, his political relations with Monnet were never easy; yet mutual respect on the personal level would seem to have survived their differences. Monnet himself voted both for the new constitution of the Fifth Republic and for de Gaulle's amendment in favour of the direct election of the President; but after the split over Europe he preferred Jean Lecanuet and even François Mitterand in the election of 1965.

ALL THIS LAY AHEAD. The first task after the liberation of France was the reconstitution of her economy in which Monnet played a notable role both as the principal designer of the much admired machinery of the French "*plan*" and in the international negotiations that culminated in the Marshall Plan and the creation of the OEEC. But although Monnet fully accepted the fact that France's first attention must be given to the measures needed to break out of the cycle of stagnation typical of her economy and society in the final decades of the Third Republic, he was more than ever convinced that there were limitations upon what one country could do on its own, or even through the merely intergovernmental activities of an organisation like the OEEC.

The work on the Combined Board in Washington had provided yet another phase in his experience of international cooperation and at Algiers he had, together with some of those who were to be his future collaborators in the making of the Communities, explored the need to do more than return to the divided Europe of the past. The origins of the Schuman Plan (from which all the rest sprang) are to be found here as well as in the more immediate question of what to do to prevent the domination of the new Europe by an inevitably resurgent Germany. The Schuman Plan itself came near to being wrecked by the unforeseen pressure of external events—the outbreak of the Korean war and the American pressure to re-arm Germany. This

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danger was averted in Monnet's eyes by the idea of a European Defence Community which, although it did not come to pass for reasons of French internal politics, did as a project give the time needed to make some form of German participation in Europe's defence acceptable. The willingness of the Americans to accept the idea of the EDC was important in this story. "*Comment ce changement était-il intervenu au moment où on l'attendait le moins, c'est l'histoire d'un déjeuner que j'eus fin juin (1951) à Paris avec Eisenhower.*" (Perhaps there is a little self-parody in that sentence.) In any event, Monnet's own account of these events is now before us to add to the other testimonies. It is perhaps natural, given his contempt for anything lacking the Supra-National or (as he prefers it) Federal element, that he dismisses as a mere face-saver the substitution of WEU for the EDC as the framework for German rearmament, and overestimates the British (as opposed to the French) origins of that particular solution.

In fact from the creation of the Coal and Steel Community through the setting up of the "Committee for the United States of Europe" (whose influence I suspect Monnet may exaggerate a little—how genuine was its "mandate" from the parties and trade unions represented on it?) to its dissolution and Monnet's retirement in 1975, the story does not deviate in its main lines. It is more fruitful to come back to the doctrines that Monnet had by now developed and that guided his actions henceforth. Both the objective and the method are worth clarifying.

THE OBJECTIVE was to create in one way or another a European Federation, a United States of Europe including all Europe west of the Iron Curtain and more especially Britain, in addition to the original "Six." That entity which would supersede the Nation-States as the main instrument for political, economic and social action would have to work in close cooperation with the United States—it is not suprising that Monnet found the policy-makers around President Kennedy as well as Kennedy himself so much men after his own heart. Only an entity of this kind could deal effectively with the Russians, the Chinese, and whatever other centres of power the newly emancipated Third World might throw up.

It is quite clear that, although recognising the ultimate claim of the Germans to reunification in some form, Monnet himself was quite willing to see the boundaries between what he called "Europe" and the Soviet-dominated areas stabilised indefinitely. The phenomenon of Soviet totalitarianism, its incompatibility with the long-term national aspirations of the non-Russian nations of Eastern Europe, the unhistorical aspects of a Europe which excluded for good Warsaw and Prague—these are perhaps indications that doctrines that emerge only from action—untempered by historical reflectiveness—have their weaknesses too.[12]

Where Monnet is at his best is however in dealing with the reasons for Britain holding back from participating in the European task, notably "*il gran rifiuto*" of 1950. While some of his comments on the general British unwillingness either to recognise the new realities of Britain's position in the world or to give permanent undertakings as to future action have been made before, there is one point which seems to me to be both original and challenging.

Monnet contends that, in 1950, the British believed it quite possible that the continent would once more be over-run (by Stalin's rather than Hitler's forces) and that they would again want to fight on in partnership with the New World. If this were so then an organic connection with the continental countries could only be a source of weakness.

Where methods are concerned, Monnet is equally forthright. While it is true that the word "*engrenage*" is a favourite one and that he is (as we have seen) wedded to the belief that unity comes through the process of working together, he does not subscribe to the view that the problem of Federation can be resolved painlessly through some kind of automatic overspill from one economic domain to another—still less is he any kind of "functionalist." What one has to do is to get men to work together when one can, and to create institutions which can carry the task forward after their own role is over: "*Rien n'est possible sans les hommes, rien n'est durable sans les institutions.*" Or again: "*la vie des institutions est plus longue que celle des hommes, et les institutions peuvent ainsi, si elles sont bien construites, accumuler et transmettre la sagesse des générations successives.*" Indeed, one of Monnet's main reasons for refusing to accept the permanence

[12] Is it frivolous to suggest that Monnet has a little personal tenderness for the Russians despite everything? In 1934 when his happiness seemed to depend upon marrying a young Italian woman, already married and under Italian law where divorce was unrecognised, he solved their problem by going to the Soviet Union and securing her a divorce under Soviet law, and then marrying her in a Soviet ceremony. He may feel obscurely grateful to them for his subsequent years of married bliss. In any event, the episode is worth recording as an example of Monnet's ingenuity when faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

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of Britain's absence from the European scene was his belief (all too flattering one might think) that the British were uniquely gifted in their understanding of institutions: "*Les Anglais comprennent mieux les institutions et la manière de s'en servir que les continentaux. Ceux-ci pensent que ce sont les hommes qui règlent les affaires, et certes les hommes sont importants, mais sans les institutions ils ne décident rien de grand et durable—cela les Anglais le savent depuis longtemps.*"

Even so, of course, the human instinct not to do anything radical if one can avoid it is difficult to overcome. Monnet is quite right to remind us that at the time of "Suez" in 1956, the Committee for the United States of Europe pointed out publicly the dangers for Western Europe in its excessive dependence upon Middle Eastern oil for its energy and the threat to its political independence of action that this posed. Yet after the immediate crisis passed, it was not until the embargo of 1973 that governments awoke to the full implications of these facts. And even now. . . .

BUT THE CENTRAL POINT IS that institutions do not behave automatically; they rely on human initiatives to make use of them. A truly United Europe will not emerge simply as a result of the operation of the Brussels and Luxembourg and Strasbourg institutions of today. Positive decisions to delegate a further measure of sovereignty are required. In what circumstances these decisions may be taken we cannot foresee. Clearly when it comes to the point, the instinct to fall back on the Nation-State is still very deep-rooted. The "summit meetings" of the heads of government of the Nine, upon which Monnet pinned the final hopes of the Committee at the time of its dissolution, are clearly not going to be more than routine occasions. It is hard to realise that what was originally proposed was nothing less than a "Provisional Government" for Europe.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW is whether the institutions that have been created and the steps that have been taken to implement the European idea are irreversible, whether a return to unimpeded sovereignty on the part of our respective countries is now unthinkable. Monnet obviously believes that it is. He looks forward to the day when some future historian will tell the story of the creation of "Europe" in epic style, raising his eyes above the minutiae of the daily business of the European institutions with which we are all necessarily preoccupied: "*Je crois en effet que la naissance de l'Europe apparaîtra, avec le recul, comme une aventure fulgurante.*"

One reason for one's surviving uncertainties about this vision is the degree to which the original instinct to break out of the bounds of the Nation-State may have been not so much (as it would now seem) over-ambitious as that it was too limited when it confined itself to the idea of a super-State based upon the available units existing in the Western Europe of Monnet's time. It would be ironical if we were to spend great efforts in persuading Europeans to take less parochial views at a time when so many of their problems emanate from the external world. Such reflections are fortified by considering Wayland Kennet's book, *The Futures of Europe*, based on a report to the Commission appointed to suggest ways in which its long-term forecasting arrangements might be improved.[13] One could of course say that the fact that the Report has so far not been acted upon, that the idea of a permanent forecasting institution looking ahead for at least thirty-year spans—"the Europe plus Thirty Project"—is still only an idea, shows that there is too little readiness to think in European terms about the variety of issues, technological, economic and social, which the member-States themselves are already thinking about and investigating in terms of their own national commitments and needs. Indeed one of the useful aspects of the Report is the light it casts on what governments are doing and on the different techniques of forecasting they adopt.

But if one looks at the problems sector by sector one is confronted by the ever-repeated observation that what Western Europe can do for itself depends to such a large degree upon developments elsewhere, and on decisions made by States outside the EEC, that any forecasting for Europe to be useful must be global in scope.

Nor is this surprising. As Lord Kennet reminds us at the very beginning of the work: "In 1920 the present European Community countries contained 9.7% of the world's population, in 1970 it was 6.9% and in 2000 it is unlikely to be more than 4.6%." Nor can the decline in Europe's strength and its increasing vulnerability be made good (as Monnet inclines to suggest) by a consolidation of its close relations with the United States. Indeed Lord Kennet suggests that even in defence matters—where this relationship is closest at present—the Europeans may have to develop greater responsibilities and a greater capacity for decision-making, despite the silence of the Treaties. Europe's own vision of itself, of its way of life and future progress, depends upon the continued assurance of access to raw materials

[13] *The Futures of Europe*. Edited by WAYLAND KENNET. Cambridge University Press for the Commission of the European Communities, £6.50.

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and, above all, to energy supplies which it is not strong enough to enforce. The great crisis in Europe's affairs came about in 1973 with the disappearance, perhaps for good, of the prospects of cheap and abundant energy. In the face of the possible consequences of a change of this magnitude a lot of what the Commission does in ensuring a Common Market, stimulating competition, protecting peasant farming (and so on) is just tinkering at the edges.

It is not surprising that in the body of the work one finds what amounts to a refutation of the entire Monnet thesis:

> "The world is now at last perceived to be a single system, an international configuration in which the effects of trends or events in one region are disseminated very fast into the others. The more one sees things this way, the less one can ignore extra-national and extra-EEC forces, or the external impacts of domestic and EEC policies, and the less can one believe, whether implicitly or explicitly, in uniquely national or EEC solutions."

Yet none of the forecasting methods, mathematical or other, that we have at our disposal enables us to say what the shape of the entire world will be in "thirty years' time." Can we even be certain that our own societies will follow the same general paths in the totally altered circumstances? The Report takes it for granted that "the new insistence in Western Europe on greater social relevance in government policies, and on reduced human inequality" has come to stay. It is as hard to say whether this is so as it is to be certain that the "socialist" countries will remain "socialist" or the Third and Fourth Worlds remain united. Perhaps one must go back to Jean Monnet's simple faith: "*on s'engage et puis on voit.*" Battles have been won that way; and lost too.

Minister

We're going to need the minister
to help this heavy body into the ground.

But he won't dig the hole.
Others who are stronger and weaker will have to do that.
And he won't wipe his nose and his eyes.
Others who are weaker and stronger will have to do that.
And he won't bake cakes or take care of the kids—
it's women's work: anyway,
what would they do at a time like this
if they didn't do that?

No, we'll get the minister to come
and take care of the words.

He doesn't have to make them up.
He doesn't have to say them well.
He doesn't have to like them
so long as they agree to obey him.
We have to have the minister
so the words will know where to go.
Imagine them circling and circling
the confusing cemetery.
Imagine them roving the earth
without anywhere to rest.

Anne Stevenson

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Jon Stallworthy

A Familiar Tree

The movement of humanity, arising as it does from innumerable arbitrary human wills, is continuous.

To understand the laws of this continuous movement is the aim of history. . . .

The peasants say that a cold wind blows in late spring because the oaks are budding, and really every spring cold winds do blow when the oak is budding. But though I do not know what causes the cold winds to blow when the oak-buds unfold, I cannot agree with the peasants that the unfolding of the oak-buds is the cause of the cold wind, for the force of the wind is beyond the influence of the buds. I see only a coincidence of occurrences such as happens with all the phenomena of life. . . .

To study the laws of history we must completely change the subject of our observation, we must leave aside kings, ministers, and generals, and study the common, infinitesimally small elements by which the masses are moved.

LEO TOLSTOY, *War and Peace*

At the Church of St John Baptist, Preston Bissett

Dear John, if a sinner may so
address a saint in his own house,
I come, as others about to go
on a journey have come to these
worn steps, through seven centuries,
to ask a blessing, make their vows,
and look for assent, a sign from your window.

Here they received the names that are
all that remain of them, brown ink
in a parish register,
a shadow on lichened stone:
and among those lifelines, my own.
It draws me outside to the brink
of their graves and it draws me further.

Let me go down to them and learn
what they learnt on their journeys.
And in the looted cavern
of the skull, let me restore
their sight, their broken speech, before
from these worn steps or steps like these
speechless to the speechless I return.

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England*

Mother and Son

1738

Hush-a-bye baby on the tree top
I am thy tree and thou
my acorn an the Lord allow
shall grow to rock acorns and drop

them and see saplings grow in thy shade
Hush-a-bye baby baby no more
Baby thou went in at the church door
and John thy father when the parson laid

white hands on thee said Let his name
be John *And whatsoever*
Adam called every living creature
that was the name thereof Thou came'st

hush-a-bye baby baby no more
John from the font into the sun
the churchyard where the sexton
was talking to the wind Thy father bore

thee through the village like a prize calf
greeting the neighbours' God
ha' mercy with a grave nod
a nod for the shout across fields the laugh

from a thatcher's ladder So many years
at my goodman's side
stretching my stride
to keep step with the grazier's

and him still a stranger When the wind blows
the cradle will rock Sown
in me grown in me known
to me always There the cock crows

My dearest stranger stirs and soon the bed
will grumble shaken to its roots
as he swings out groping for his boots
He has a calf too lowing to be fed

Old John Young John

1744

The day my father stayed in bed
Aunt said Ann send the boy out
but I said father said
he would teach me to tickle trout

Not today nor any day
Aunt said So I went out and scratched
the pig's back gave the horses hay
and all the morning watched

them come and go the other aunts
and neighbour women all with their
aprons to their eyes old Chance
the joiner sniffing the air

and Mister Pearse with his Good Book
At midday mother called me in
Father was lying on his back
with a cloth tied under his chin

Today he came down in a chest
the uncles carried set down let
down *That which thou sowest*
is not quickened except

it die die halfway to Hell
he stared from darkringed knots I could
hear him his hands as the clods fell
on him hammering the wood

I was lying above the place
where he caught the freckled trout
when there far down was his face
very white and one hand stretched out

Before I could seize it with mine
the pike struck the water boiled

Hush he is sleeping Sleep thou child
and wake a man his four fields thine

*The first section of a four-part poem.

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To the Honourable Members of the House of Commons

1782

Sirs:
We the undersigned
Freeholders, Farmers, Cottagers
of Preston Bissett, being of one mind,
beg Leave to represent
that those Persons of this Parish
with immemorial Entitlement
to Common Right on Lands some wish
now to inclose, would be deprived thereby
of an inestimable Benefit.
The Beasts they graze on the said Lands supply
their Families with Milk and Meat
in the clenched Belly of the Year,
and furthermore, they now produce
lean Cattle for the Grazier
to fatten and bring at a fair Price
to Market. This we conceive to be
the shortest Path
to Public Plenty and Prosperity,
and we conceive the Aftermath
of the Bill before the House
to be Depopulation of a Village
now filled with vigorous
and hardy Sons of the Tillage,
from whom, and the Inhabitants
of other open Parishes,
the Nation has supplied those Regiments
and Fleets that through the Ages
have been its Strength
and Glory. Driven from the Soil
into the swollen Towns, they must at length
be so enfeebled by their Toil
at Loom and Forge as to debilitate
their Posterity and thence
by slow Degrees obliterate
that Principle of Obedience
to the Laws of God and Man,
which forms the Character of such
as have the Right of Common,
and on which Principle so much
depends the Government
and good Order of the Realm.
These, the Petitioners represent,
will be the Injuries to them
and evil Consequences to the State
of the Inclosure now proposed,
as elsewhere it hath been of late,
and being thus exposed
they pray the House (the Constitutional
Protector of the Poor) to heed
this their Petition that the Bill
may not be suffered to proceed:
and have the Honour to remain
etcetera, Will Richardson,
Josiah Quainton, Henry Payne,
John Stallworthy, Will Orchard, Thomas Dunn.

In the Name of God Amen

Bowing and scraping the notary's pen:
This is the last will and testament
of
whom had he the honour to address?
John Stallworthy
and my employment?
Grazier
of what parish?
Pres-
ton Bissett in the County of Buckingham
Name of God name of grazier
name of parish Where does a name
come from what is it worth
in the year
of our Lord one thousand eight hundred
and six
What had I to bequeath?
my soul into the hands of God
and my body to be laid beneath
a decent stone
my goods and chattels?
unto my wife Ann Stallworthy
Also my stock of cattle
and implements of husbandry
And I bequeath unto my sons
John Stallworthy and William
Stallworthy
faith in God's mercy none
in the justice of men
the sum
of twenty pounds apiece
my property?
Less to my name in life
than the churchyard holds for me
It is my wish that my said wife
Ann shall succeed me as occupier
of the land I hold and occupy
of Thomas Coke Esquire
once open as the open sky

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The Birds o' the Parish

circa 1810

Spring come early, spring come late,
When the oak put on its leaves,
The martin and the swallow
Would build beneath the eaves.
But since squire 'closed the common,
Men take the road to town
And thatch where nestlings grew and flew
The wind and rain pull down.

Spring come early or late today,
The birds o' the parish are vanisht away.

Summer come early, summer come late,
The pigeon and the rook
Would lease between the women
Behind the reaping hook.
But since squire 'closed the common
And leasin's called a crime,
Men go to prison for it
And birds are snared in lime.

Summer come early or late today,
The birds o' the parish are vanisht away.

Autumn come early, autumn come late,
The ouzel on the briar
Would sing with those who hewed a log
To feed a cottage fire.
But since squire 'closed the common
And cleared it for the plough,
The poor man must burn cattle dung—
Until he lose his cow.

Autumn come early or late today,
The birds o' the parish are vanisht away.

Winter come early, winter come late,
When icicles grew on the hedge
The sparrow never lacked a crumb
Left on a window ledge.
But since squire 'closed the common,
The poor are starving so
The sparrow on the window ledge
Must stiffen in the snow.

Winter come early or late today,
The birds o' the parish are vanisht away.

William

1815

Bells dinting the afternoon
from Buckingham Gawcott and then
the clappers of Bissett bang bang
as if Christ were risen again
on a Thursday in June

Happen a great fire but no smoke
Legged it over the fields bang bang
the heart under my smock
to *Victory Boney to hang*
from an English oak

Tankards passed from The Old Hat
a health to the Duke one more
and a health to his men bang bang
Who dragged the cart out wood straw
and the pitch-barrel who fired that

Tankard empty tankard full
Brawling for a suck at the bung
Dark where what field nettles my tongue
No quarter cannon bells bang bang
break tower sky skull

To Samuel Greatheed, Evangelist, Newport Pagnell Chapel

1822

Good Master Greatheed,
do you mind
the boy at Preston Bissett where
you preeched by the In? I am he
lost without light. How do I find
the wickett gate? I pray you gyde
your servant, Sir,
George Stallworthy

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News From Home

1831

My nephew,
Have our troubles come
to your godly ears? Red sky at night
a rick alight, and at Wycomb
last month the bloodiest fight
I ever saw. Came shouts at dawn,
uproar outside the inn, the sound
of feet and a rallying horn.
It was a band of labourers bound
on violent business, so their staves
and sledgehammers declared. One called
my name: he with the horn, Ned Graves,
your school-fellow. "We're one and all!"
said he. I fell in step with him,
asking what brought him there. "A purse
and belly with nothing in them."
I prayed him keep the peace lest worse
befall. At which he blew his horn.
We had come to the edge of town
and a mill, whose gates were soon sawn
from their hinges. Someone threw down
vitriol and many were burned
as they burst in. The new machines
were sledgehammered till no cog turned
another. There were violent scenes
at other mills. A cleric read
the Riot Act. "Be off and claim
your thirty pieces!" shouted Ned.
And then the soldiers came.

Today at Aylesbury I heard
false witness from a man of God.
God repay him. It went hard
with Ned. Transported—dreadful word—
for seven years. Because he had
no work, transported seven years.
Because his children cried for bread
at night, transported seven years.
Because he blew a horn, because
a vicar valued the truth less
than tithes, transported seven years.
How, if the shepherd so transgress,
shall sheep not stray? Are there not rams
caught in our thickets, and can you
not set them free? Are heathen lambs
more hungry than our own? Nephew,
your fathers' flocks are calling. Shall
they call in vain?

John Stallworthy

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Patchwork

1833

A house without a man
a pod without a pea
William gone under the ground
George going over the sea
Come little needle you
and I have work to do

Grey silk for the village
William's wedding vest
and this for God's acre
my cotton Sunday-best
with the Michaelmas daisies
He always liked these

For Claydon Brook a ribbon
Lenborough Wood sateen
remnants of chintz and twill
the crowded fields between
and from this pair of sleeves
a border of oak leaves

Though seas be heaped between us
my son shall sleep at home
and when he takes a bride
may she find here with him
on this familiar ground
what William and I found

The Tuscan

16 October 1833

My dear Uncle,
Lying tonight
at Gravesend, joyful augury
of our journey's end, I write
from a full heart.
As we came aboard,
a cloud inland outran the rest
unfurling, as it swirled toward
us, wings that darkened the bright West,
shadowed the shore and estuary.
Above the listening ship it broke
and every mast became a tree
again, budded with birds. They spoke
to me shrilly of home, their mud
nests under your eaves, and your voice
calling me. But the voice of God
was calling them South. I rejoice
to have heard His summons. May His cloud
of witnesses speak in the Spring
to you: of heathen fields well ploughed,
well planted and worth harvesting
as any in Preston Bissett.
Although you cannot approve
or bless my choice, do not forget
one who remembers you with love,
Your nephew George

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ART

The Art of Forgery

Authentic & False—By WILFRIED WIEGAND

". . . because a work of art, even when it is good, will only be respected when it is old."

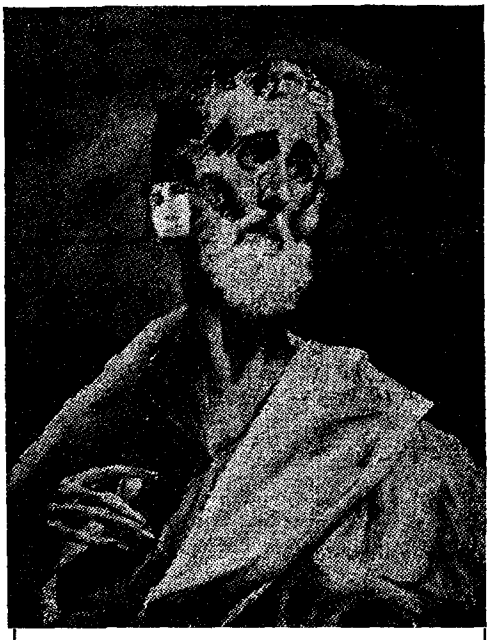
Aesop

FORGERIES FASCINATE, and could it be that the less an individual knows about art, the greater the fascination? To the art historian these are little more than an irritation, to be quietly eliminated by all the resources of technique and expertise. But to the layman they often occupy a central position in his interest in art. Your amateur becomes an aesthetician, not in front of a work of art, but in front of a deceptively brilliant imitation. Not a true but a phoney Rembrandt gives him the courage to take part in the everlasting discussion of "what art really is."

The expert's tendency to pass over forgery in silence is intelligible enough, since it is a mere obstacle on the high road of cultural history. The layman's fascination with it is just as intelligible, for it enables him to counter far-fetched interpretative speculations with the indestructible half-truth that art is "mere skill" and nothing else. Has the modern forger not shown that it is still possible to paint exactly as in the olden days? Has he not rediscovered "secrets" of the Old Masters, their sublime painterliness? Are not the two pictures, the genuine and the false, so alike that you can hardly tell the difference?

An attempt to provide answers to these disagreeable questions is made in an exhibition entitled *Forgery and the Expert* now open in Berlin. A good two hundred items are displayed, and are dealt with thoroughly in the catalogue. Every style and school of Western art from Greek sculpture to contemporary painting is represented. There seems to be nothing in the field of the arts—medieval carvings, etchings of the age of Dürer, Renaissance seals and Nazarene paintings, Frans Hals and Rembrandt, Vermeer and Karl Hofer, work in stone, enamel and wood—that has not at some time or other been forged.

The Berlin exhibition makes very heavy going of the idea and concept of forgery. Copying, forgery, and various intermediate stages are carefully distinguished. Everyone knows that *copies* (as well as free exercises in the style of another master or a different period) have nothing to do with forgery so long as the new work is not sold as an old one, with intent to deceive. Unfortunately, to demonstrate this self-evident proposition, the Berlin exhibition has been loaded with numerous non-forgeries that could have been dispensed with. Also facsimiles of a drawing that



THE PORTRAIT OF SAINT PAUL *by "El Greco" was temporarily removed from the Bavarian State collection for cleaning, and it was never allowed to return. Suspicions as to its authenticity developed during the chemical cleaning, and X-rays confirmed them. Hidden elements of a subsequent (18th-century) style were detected (inset, under right ear), and it was pronounced a forged copy of El Greco's portrait in the Madrid Escorial.*

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we can compare with the original are irrelevant in this context. The differences between Original and Reproduction are interesting, but contribute nothing whatever to the subject of forgery. Wouldn't it have been more interesting to see a forged "Vermeer" by Hans Van Meegeren side by side with a genuine Vermeer? But only the graphics section provides opportunities for such stylistic comparisons; otherwise an often stubborn restriction to copied art prevails. (A forged piece of Renaissance sculpture is described in the catalogue as "a copy of a marble bust to be found in Berlin." It can, in point of fact, be found a few rooms further on. Wouldn't it have been a good idea to place original and copy side by side?)

I am afraid the exhibition offers the visitor several other opportunities to get annoyed at such didactic abstinence. On the other hand, it offers little temptation to imitate the superiority of those art historians who act as if forgery presented no problem—since the true expert would always detect the difference between genuine and false. The catalogue (by several hands) is full of passages in which forgeries are so treated that one is almost persuaded that a true art historian is someone who could never be taken in.

BUT THERE WILL BE forgers as long as there is an art trade, and the race between forgery and detection will continue as in the past. At the moment the scientists are enjoying a short lead, but the optimism expressed in large lettering in several places in the exhibition seems misplaced. We are told, for instance, that "forgeries in iron are revealed by unusual purity of the metal; antique iron contains many impurities." Elsewhere we are assured that "forgeries in gold are generally of purer gold than antique objects." In both cases one is tempted to add: But how long will that last?

IT WOULD, I think, be wrong to attribute any particular method of composition to the forger. This is nowhere explicitly claimed in the Berlin catalogue, but some statements are so formulated that a layman would certainly find confirmation for his preconceived idea that every forger's use

ANCIENT BRONZE HORSE *(Greece, 470 B.C.). "The most beautiful of its kind in the world", was Professor Ludwig Curtius' judgment in 1927, after its acquisition by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Forty years later certain new experimental tests, taken from industrial technology, appeared to indicate that the "monumental masterpiece" (40.2 cm. high) was a forgery, and it was withdrawn from show. More recently scientific expertise, including results from "space physics laboratories", has "rehabilitated" it; and it forms the centrepiece in the Berlin Exhibition of "the real and the counterfeit in art."*

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of subjects and stylistic methods differs from that of his model. It is certainly true that many forgers use the *pasticcio* method, *i.e.* take details from several of their model's works and compose them into a new work. But haven't great creative artists used exactly the same method? It is certainly true that in forgeries the drawing is often more uncertain than in the original, and that misunderstood or non-functional ornamentation can often reveal a forgery. But that is true only when the imitation is of a great master to whom the forger is naturally inferior. When he imitates an average work of an earlier period (which in the case of Greek, Egyptian, or even mediaeval art is of sufficient financial reward), why shouldn't a talented forger introduce a few cheeky "improvements" of his own?

One of the merits of the Berlin exhibition is that it draws attention to a number of difficulties of this kind. One of its most striking features is that it shows a number of items that have only recently been exposed as forgeries (or "rehabilitated", as in the case of the New York bronze horse). There are also a number of items on which the last word has not yet been spoken. One of the works on view, for instance, is a forged drawing that was shown as an Egon Schiele at a big exhibition as recently as 1975. Another drawing attributed to Schiele (this one from a museum) is stated to be "doubtful."

WHEN FACED WITH SUCH WORKS one's ideas of what is genuine and what is phoney tend to grow a bit hazy. Still more upsetting are those works that are unquestionably not genuine but of which it is practically impossible to establish whether they were forgeries in the *legal* sense or stylistic imitations carried out as a way of reconstructing the past.

The Italian sculptor Giovanni Bastianini (1830–1868), for instance, always denied any dishonourable intentions. He claimed exactly the same freedom to use Renaissance stylistic means that was granted as a matter of course to the architects of his time. But, as his works passed from hand to hand, they generally ended by being sold to somebody as genuine products of the Renaissance; and this even happened to the Louvre, which paid more than double for a Bastianini bust than it had paid for the Venus de Milo. When a dealer eventually revealed the truth, people refused to believe that Bastianini could produce such perfect works of art. Probably only his early death prevented anticipation of the performance put up by the Dutch painter Hans Van Meegeren (1889–1947) who, when his self-denunciation soon after the Second World War earned nothing but incredulity, produced a forgery under state supervision. Only then was his claim believed that all the Vermeers that had appeared in recent years were his own work.

LUKAS CRANACH, "*Bildnis einer Edelfrau*" *(1564).*

PABLO PICASSO, *Buste de femme d'après Cranach. (Both Cranach's oil portrait and Picasso's coloured lino-cut variation are in the Albertina, Vienna.)*

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Looking at Bastianini's hyper-realistic faces today, it is not difficult to discern in them the Renaissance superman ideal to be found in the writings of Burckhardt, Nietzsche and Gobineau. And in Van Meegeren's once so highly praised "Vermeers" it is just as easy to see the languishing glances of the cinema star and the all too finely arched full lips beloved of Hollywood. Once they are exposed as forgeries, those shameless reflections of contemporary taste always seem to say more about the imitating than the imitated period. The chief merit of the Berlin exhibition is that it directs our attention to the elements of contemporary expression that often refuse to be suppressed under even the perfect drapery of stylised costume.

Sometimes the extension of art-historical knowledge is sufficient to enable the personal note that clings to any copy to be detected. In Italy the engraver Marcantonio Raimondi tried to copy the woodcuts of his contemporary Albrecht Dürer so exactly that he didn't overlook including the German artist's monogram. Presumably as a result of a protest by Dürer himself, this was specifically forbidden. To the present-day observer this would seem to have been completely superfluous since it is obvious at first sight that the works in question cannot have been by Dürer. But 16th-century Italian art collectors for lack of opportunity to see his work must have had an exceedingly vague idea of what a Dürer was like. Otherwise these forgeries would be quite inexplicable.

For they remain forgeries even though after four hundred years we no longer really treat them as such. Marcantonio Raimondi's imitations of Dürer have come to count in their own right as curiosities of cultural history, indeed as interesting documentation of the contemporary reaction to Dürer; and we display them in museums as the forger's own work, quite disregarding his dishonest intentions.

AFTER A FEW CENTURIES there appears to be no point in talking about forgery and removing from circulation works forged such a long time ago. Forgery is a crime of deceit. When the possibility of deception has ceased to exist, the forgery becomes an aesthetic object; it now belongs not to lawyers and judges but to art-historians. A forgery as soon as it is exposed is curiously transformed into an original work by the forger —and to that extent it becomes a work of art. In the last resort this means that forgeries can be exhibited in a museum under their right names, that is, the names of those who produced them. Van Meegeren's pictures would then, of course, be hung, not next to Vermeer's, but among the surrealists and magical realists of his own time.

Most forgeries can be expected to come out badly from such a comparison, for those that can stand up to such a test are presumably even rarer than genuine works of art of high quality. In favour of this sceptical assumption is the fact that in the past history of forgery only about half-a-dozen "great" forger personalities have emerged with an extensive *oeuvre* and an (involuntarily) discernible style of their own. After all, most of those who have anything to say become artists.

Propitiation

He always apologised to statues
And sometimes to furniture, when he bumped into it.
He felt no superiority to insects
But removed them carefully from kitchen surfaces.

He sat at the wheel of a car
Thinking of a world without predators
Or generals.
A moment's absent-mindedness—
A child on a bicycle died.

No, no, it didn't. It never happened.
But he lived, all his life, with this catastrophe
In imagination, as he ferried his insects
To places of safety, and apologised to statues.

Elma Mitchell

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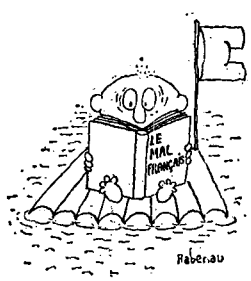
NOTES & TOPICS

European Notebook

By François Bondy

Evil Thoughts

Paris



IN ONE OF HIS recent press conferences the French President called attention several times to a new book which had become one of the nation's best-sellers, although its pessimism in the analysis of old French difficulties is in sharp contrast to the official optimism. The author of *Le Mal Français* is a former Minister and was once the general-secretary of the Gaullist Party; his previous best-seller was a book on the Awakening of China, based only on a short trip and quick research. So how much expertise can one expect from Alain Peyrefitte?

When he was Minister of Information, an Orwellian job that most Western democracies hesitate to create, the country was not exactly deluged with fresh facts about thorny issues and grievous problems. He also had the bad luck to be the Minister of Education during the "May Troubles" of 1968 and was one of its first victims. Expecting only a feeling for anecdotes and an irrepressible cleverness, the reader is quite surprised by *Le Mal Français*. No doubt about it, it is an important document, compiling as it does—and with some drama and tension—incident after incident of political life at the Top, illustrating inertia, wilfulness, waste, arrogance on the part of the mighty who were otherwise quite honest and intelligent public servants. The pages on the seven-year struggle to push through a long-needed statute governing work in the French clay-pits (it was finally won by a devious "blackmail" manoeuvre using the budget of the Education Ministry) is a hair-raising account of Paris maladministration and will take its place in the history of French governmental scandals.

It is all very much of an "inside" story. On 15 April 1962 Peyrefitte was led into his office by his predecessor, Christian de la Malène, and briefed on the various buttons and bells: how to ring for the butler, the *chef du cabinet*, the director of the French TV, the editor of the TV News, the head of the Radio bulletins. "At five o'clock you will be giving them all their instructions and guide-lines. . . ." Soon Peyrefitte, as he tells it, found himself part of the system against his own will, shaping each day the French picture of the news of the world.

I was struck by the fact that Peyrefitte refers, always favourably, to Herbert Luethy's old classic analysis of French evils, *Frankreichs Uhren gehen anders* (1954), and I can recall that at the time even Raymond Aron, who was responsible for its being published in his Calmann-Levy "collection", thought the sharpness excessive and the pessimism outdated. Over two decades later a piece of French self-criticism is not dismissed as "anti-French masochism" but evidently welcomed as a patriotic act from a member of the Paris establishment. Reform tendencies among the powers-that-be are not exactly widespread, but the Peyrefitte book conforms the diagnosis of the reformers, and is consequently more than a best-selling title: it is a political act with a dash of old-time Gaullist energy about it but closer in content to the new "giscardism."

Death of a Prince

Paris

EVIDENTLY the murder of Prince Jean de Broglie did him a good deal of harm. No soldiers were dispatched to carry his coffin, only firemen turned up. Three Ministers and the President of Parliament, Edgar Faure, failed to show at the last minute because of "the weather", namely a flurry of snow. There were precious few "last honours" for the Prince de Broglie at his funeral in the Norman village of Broglie. After all he had been Minister several times, was a Paris deputy, a member of the European Parliament, and on the board of directors of some 42 companies. And on the historic family tree there were three Marshals, a Prime Minister, two famous physicists, as well as branches which

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featured Mme de Staël as well as Rothschilds. The village of Broglie buried its mayor in the presence of his widow and three sons.

Once he had the glory of the successful French diplomat who had negotiated the recognition of Algeria at the Evian conference. Then came a certain coolness from both Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing as he became a businessman with suspected deals in Middle East armaments. But the circumstances of his death put paid to the ancestral aura of distinction. It happened on a Paris street, the rue des Dardanelles, in front of No. 2, a house in which two very shady characters, Allenet de Ribemont and Pierre de Varga, continued to reside although they had more than once faced fraud-squad inquiries and police arrest. What was the nature of their "complex" business deals?

The name of a chief police inspector, Guy Simoné, was found in all three address books. Who had been protecting him over a long career in the police (which, strangely enough, had no file on him) marred by serious charges of attempted murder and other suspicions? When Simoné was arrested he was drinking champagne with two underworld characters; and he promptly confessed "everything", although his friends in the rue des Dardanelles quickly denied "everything." At this point Prince Poniatowski, the Minister of Justice, made up his mind; and blithely ignoring all the great traditions of innocent-until-proven-guilty he announced the names of all the guilty ones. M. de Ribemont has meanwhile been released from custody.

What was quite clear for the Minister of Justice was neither clear nor proper. As the details of Jean de Broglie's financial machinations came to light in a network knotted by cheap hoodlums and hit-men, one couldn't help thinking of at least the title of that Balzac novel: *A Shadowy Affair*.

"Let us have an end to the Republic of scoundrels and accomplices!" This was once Poniatowski's warning cry to the Gaullists. More Balzacian light on this shadowy affair will have political as well as criminological implications. I suppose that those brilliant artists of family trees, France's genealogists, will also be troubled, for "*Noblesse oblige*" was not exactly the motto of the life and death of this Prince de Broglie. I have just looked again at *Larousse* where there are pictures of at least five of his illustrious ancestors. Who will come forward to explain how he died shabbily on a Paris side-street and why he was buried in his ancestral village in disgrace?

On That Other Great Dictionary

. . . and the American Language—By R. W. Burchfield

"I HAVE A CURSED HANKERING after certain musty old values", says Lord Peter Wimsey in Dorothy Sayers' *Gaudy Night*.

And so, it seems, have a great many people when they pause to think about the language we use, particularly when they encounter a newly invented word or phrase. How many of us would react neutrally, or even possibly in a friendly way, to a word I came across recently in a leaflet about pets? An American magazine, it said, is in process of publishing a list of cat horoscopes. A Leo cat, born between 24 July and 23 August, is described as super-arrogant, and should be owned only by people born under certain favourable signs, Taurus, Scorpio, and one or two others. On the other hand, Cancer cats are moody and should be owned only by Cancer people. "Astromogology [it declared] should be a fascinating new science."

Such a word, grotesquely misformed but in use commercially, points the way to one of the major problems facing lexicographers in the present century. "Put it in the dictionary", cries one, "it's in use." "Over my dead body", cries another, "it's a horrible word."

Let me focus a little more closely on the problem of "words in use" and their inclusion in dictionaries. The oldest contributor to the *Oxford English Dictionary* recently submitted what he called "the last gathering of a very old tree"—he said that he is "now touching 96" and can no longer go on with the work. The quotations he sent consisted of fifty or so neatly

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copied-out examples from his usual range of slightly recondite literary and religious sources, and in his covering note he added:

> "I cannot sufficiently deplore the inclusion of obscene words and senses in the O.E.D. 'Climate of opinion' cannot excuse the horrors of great apostasy now evident and for the moment triumphant. I hope that I will be pardoned for saying this but I must deliver my soul. Also I deplore the great space given to American and Australasian slang or colloquial, while Newman's excellent word *groundstead* and the like are overlooked or omitted."

Here is a commanding and a respected voice—the man in question was born in the 1880s just as the *O.E.D.* was beginning to appear, and he knew Sir James Murray well. Obscenities, Americanisms, Australianisms, these should be excluded; and excellent words like *groundstead*, formed, it will be noticed, from two words of Anglo-Saxon origin, should be placed in the lexicon. He wrote to me in 1976 but his views are those of most scholars who were young at the beginning of the century.

Now let me quote another opinion from the less distant past, a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* (2 September 1926) just half a century ago:

> "America is not likely to develop a new language until its civilisation becomes more complicated and more refined than that of Britain; and there are no indications that this will ever happen. Meanwhile, America will continue to provide a small number of new words which can usefully be digested by the parent language."

Who would you think wrote that? T. S. Eliot, no less, with uncharacteristic complacency. The target is in part the same, the American language, transatlantic yeast seen by him from a distance to be slowly but harmlessly fermenting.

AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY and soon afterward several new dictionaries appeared, some of them in the Johnson tradition, some simpler like the *Concise Oxford* in 1911, and some more complicated like the *Century Dictionary*, the Funk & Wagnalls dictionary, and the incomparable *O.E.D.* itself. The loyal subjects of Queen Victoria, of Edward VII, and of George V, and their analogues in America and in the old colonies, in general felt that the language was in good hands—what could go wrong with Webster's editors, Murray, and the Fowlers as custodians of the language? Just one small cloud stood on the horizon. What if these great dictionaries omitted items that should have been included?

In 1888 one Mrs Anna Randall-Diehl, American despite her hyphenated name, wrote a book called *Two Thousand Words and their Definitions: Not in Webster's Dictionary*. Some were very obvious words, like *astrakhan, asymmetrically*, and *bacteriology*; others were of less validity, like *bibliosponge*, "one who gets the reading of books without buying them, a book borrower." Almost as soon as the *O.E.D.* was finished another pointer-out of omissions, G. G. Loane, issued a list of a thousand words that the author claimed should have been included. And so the target became "omissions", thousands and thousands of them. A dictionary without, for example, *catharism* ("pretended perfection") and *grigger* ("name of a shrub in Africa") simply wouldn't do. Even the largest dictionaries came to be thought of by some scholars as Crown Jewels with the sceptre missing and a bauble or two besides.

By the early 1930s, however, Britain could sit back and admire the completed *O.E.D.*, and America had its splendid second edition of Webster's New International, the English one in thirteen volumes and the American in either one or two depending how it was bound up. The lexicographers were given their knighthoods—some of them anyway—and the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, gave a memorable speech in the Goldsmiths' Hall in London. In Oxford the dictionary-makers dispersed, and the books and unused quotation slips were put away in old tea-chests. The language kept ticking away but no one was there in the cuckoo-echoing, towery city to collect the new words. The Old Ashmolean, where the *O.E.D.* had been prepared, became the Museum of the History of Science; and the dictionary people went off to write *The Hobbit*, articles for encyclopaedias and *Festschriften*, and, some of them, to prepare dictionaries of the English of specialised regions or of much older periods.

But in Springfield (Massachusetts), Webster's staff went on collecting examples of current American English use. The world learned about nudism, jazz, existentialism, pesticides, plastics, and all the rest, and the Merriam-Webster citation files became more and more extensive. Newspapers, scholarly and literary works, works about every aspect of American life—some by competent writers and some by dunces—all yielded up their vocabulary to the Webster files. The compilers of the dictionary braced themselves for the preparation of a new edition, to be called the Third New International, and by 1961 it was ready to be published. Everything seemed to be in order. The language belt needed to be adjusted here and there to make room for the new words: so they decided to leave out most of the proper names and also literary words that had passed into oblivion by 1755 when Dr Johnson's dictionary was published. This done, they could let the belt out a notch or two to

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admit all the new words, and the result, they hoped, would be an excellent dictionary.

BUT SOMETHING HAPPENED that nobody had counted on. A decade-and-a-half later we are all accustomed to public scandals of the larger order (Watergate, Lockheed, and so on), and to the iniquity of individuals. Disloyalty, sabotage, wanton destruction, all these are familiar enough to us all. But who could have predicted that *a dictionary* could be regarded as an instrument of sabotage, and its editor guilty of some sinister conspiracy to let the ogre of permissiveness loose upon the lawn? It is instructive to recall what kind of reception Webster's Third received.

> The anxiously awaited work that was to have crowned cisatlantic linguistic scholarship with a particular glory turns out to be a scandal and a disaster. . . .
>
> Webster III, behind its front of passionless objectivity, is in truth a fighting document. And the enemy it is out to destroy is every obstinate vestige of linguistic punctilio, every surviving influence that makes for the upholding of standards, every criterion for distinguishing between better usages and worse. . . .
>
> Webster's has, it is apparent, surrendered to the permissive school that has been busily extending its beachhead on English instruction in the schools. . . .
>
> We suggest to the Webster editors that they do not throw out the printing plates of the Second Edition. There is likely to be a continuing demand for it.
>
> The editors of this wondrous stew do not feel they have any duty toward their own language.

In 1963 Rex Stout's novel called *Gambit* opens with his main character Nero Wolfe depicted as burning a copy of a book:

> There's a fireplace in the front room. . . . He's seated in front of it . . . tearing sheets out of a book and burning them. The book is the . . . third edition of Webster's New International Dictionary. . . . He considers it subversive because it threatens the integrity of the English language."

Why should this massive scholarly work have been so cruelly received? I do not think that the explanations hitherto put forward are entirely satisfactory.

THE COMPLETION of the *O.E.D.* in the 1930s marked the end of an era in lexicography—the end of the period of the recording of the central core of English. Murray's celebrated chart in the Introduction to the *O.E.D.* had indicated the limits of this central core by means of an elliptical diagram. Outside the acceptable and recordable band lay the unwanted areas of dialect, technological language, foreign words that were only partially naturalised, and many kinds of ephemerality.

The spoken and written language of the educated middle and upper classes was certainly acceptable: indeed most of the sources cited in the *O.E.D.* were from the works of such people. The vocabulary of the colonies—and most of them were still colonies while the separate parts of the dictionary were being published—was also acceptable because it was distant and exotic and represented no threat to the continuity and to the dominance of the English used in Britain. Working-class speech in this country had been set down in literary works by writers from higher levels of society. If it was plain or colourful or vulgar or ungrammatical at times it was because the speech of the lower orders was thought to display all these qualities in turn or simultaneously. Demotic English was quotable in the dictionary in so far as it showed a non-conquering of the Received Language. The modern sub-cultures, with their tiresome jargon, had not appeared. The working classes had not discovered the dreadful drill of union solidarity, Butlins, package holidays in Spain, the family car, the TV set, Ian Fleming, bionic woman, and all the rest.

American dictionaries, including Webster's second edition of 1934, remained somewhat obsequiously unaware of the distinctive way in which the American language was developing. That relatively small segment of the English language that had been traditionally placed in the main English dictionaries was considered to be representative enough for this second edition of Webster. It was published and the minstrels in the mead-halls sang in praise of it all. But outside the mead-halls, as in *Beowulf*, lay fens and bogs and dark forests of language not at that stage considered to have a place in dictionaries. And a new theory of "language in use", of descriptivism as opposed to prescriptivism, was making itself felt.

Baseball players and popular entertainers were writing books, as was Mickey Spillane, and others for whom verbal infelicity hardly mattered. Mystical religions and drug-taking were studied and mildly experienced by mescaline-taking Aldous Huxley. And then hordes of young people took over from him on the trail of hallucinatory experiences, and wrote books and magazine articles notable for their frankness but rarely for their command of the English language.

Webster's staff went on reading such works, and by the end of the 1950s had an unparalleled collection of vocabulary from areas of language not hitherto recorded on any scale in dictionaries: the new unbeautiful language of the technologists, of Madison Avenue, the Pentagon, and Hollywood, of dissident groups, and of the racial minorities of the United States, Yiddish speakers,

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Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Polish, Pennsylvanian Dutch, and so on.

Chutzpah joined the language, and *dunk*, and *hopefully* in its now deplored use. Repugnant acronymic formations proliferated as if to underline the linguistic impoverishment and superficial ingenuity of the modern period. None of this mattered to begin with as the hospitable English language had absorbed many such individual items and other word-forming techniques in the past. But by 1961 the spring had become a flood, and the flood a torrent. By a "words in use" doctrine, insisted upon by linguistic theorists, nearly everything noticed by the scanning eye of the dictionary readers needed to be included. The central approved band of vocabulary had been invaded by numberless items from the peripheral classes of vocabulary that up till then had been excluded.

THE EDITOR of Webster's Third, Dr Philip Gove, no compromiser he, accepted that his duty lay in setting down the language as he found it in his files. If some people with university degrees were using *disinterested* and *infer* in ways which had hitherto been frowned upon, he recorded them as acceptable new uses. He seemed to be on the side of the disreputables, and to be thumbing a nose at those who valued discrimination in the use of words.

He also maintained the American tradition of defining words in an encyclopaedic manner. For example, the word *hotel* was defined as follows:

> A building of many rooms chiefly for overnight accommodation of transients and several floors served by elevators, usu. with a large open street-level lobby containing easy chairs, with a variety of compartments for eating, drinking, dancing, exhibitions, and group meetings (as of salesmen or convention attendants), with shops having both inside and street-side entrances and offering for sale items (as clothes, gifts, candy, theater tickets, travel tickets) of particular interest to a traveler, or providing personal services (as hairdressing, shoe shining), and with telephone booths, writing tables, and washrooms freely available.

Now what happens, one might ask, if the hotel you slept in last week lacks some of these features? Is it therefore not a hotel? The British tradition of defining is much simpler: in the *Shorter Oxford*, for example, the word *hotel* is defined simply as "an inn, esp. one of a superior kind."

In the unprecedented conditions of the 30-year period since the early 1930s, the American language had moved on from a kind of late Mayflower period to a much more strident stage, marked by brash innovation of vocabulary at various levels of society, by an abandonment in many quarters of any concept of well-formedness for words and sentences, by an invasion of the central area of traditional American English by the language of the technologists, by the syrupy double-talk of politicians and strategists, and by the unacceptable or non-standard grammar of the speech of certain ethnic minorities.

And when this was all set down with deadly accuracy in Webster's Third, the American language was no longer to be regarded as an acceptable model to the outside world. The lexicographers' "sabotage" lay in not concealing what had happened to American English, which now, it had to be admitted, was being used, and recorded as being used, by large and powerful groups of people who did not speak the admired and approved form of English that had been handed down from generation to generation since the arrival of English settlers in North America. Meanwhile in Britain—Oxford, York, Manchester, and elsewhere—the traditional patterns of language that had existed in these islands for centuries remained essentially undisturbed. The regional forms of English used in our great cities and in rural areas retained their strength and continuity. The children of the new minorities (for example, the migrant Pakistanis in Bradford and elsewhere) were acquiring regional English modes of speech, and were forming their sentences in an English way. British lexicographers, under constant surveillance from journalists and other linguistically conservative groups and individuals, benefited from the traditional slowness of their trade, but much more from the power of English society to absorb its minorities.

SOME ASPECTS OF Webster's Third seem to me somewhat less than admirable, particularly the encyclopaedic nature of the definitions, and the cumbersome way in which varieties of pronunciation are indicated, and in which capitalisation is presented. It is a shame, though, that this other great dictionary, with all its meticulous scholarship, should have had to withstand such a furious onslaught, and that the late Dr Gove should have been arraigned, as it were, for un-American activities, when the proper target should have been meretricious tendencies in American English itself.

I do not know how a language can be put into reverse, or modified, except by the consent of the whole linguistic community. But so long as it stays on its present course it seems to me that American English will become an increasingly unappealing model for people at a distance, as it is already for those sections of American opinion that retain their belief in Lord Peter Wimsey's "musty old values."

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The Real Threat to the Realm

A Cambridge Student Replies to Stephen Haseler—By ROBERT SILVER

IT IS ALWAYS TEMPTING to elevate distinctions of degree into distinctions of kind. Motives for doing this are not necessarily intellectually dishonest. Most of us have a suppressed desire to make the search for an exact description of events a more romantic affair than it really is.

Dr Stephen Haseler has given way to the inner urge ("Can British Socialism Survive?", ENCOUNTER, December 1976). He creates a superb dramatisation of history. We are in a world of great ideological conflicts between Revisionism and Labourism, between Utopian and Marxism. It is a world filled with decisive moments—the failure of Hugh Gaitskell to banish Clause Four from the Labour Party constitution; the imminent expulsion of Reg Prentice from his seat at Newham; the invitations extended by the Labour movement to a bogus trade-union leader and a ruthless police-chief from the Soviet Union.

It is a version of the recent past that commands intense excitement. Skilful selection of facts can make out the differences over how much nationalisation or how much public expenditure to be more elemental than they are. Great events—under this pictorialisation of history—have great consequences; thus Dr Haseler's implication that the power of the Left in the Labour Party was given drastic momentum by a Social Democratic "failure of nerve" over Clause Four. Unfortunately the British Left has never been able to handle properly great dramatic events; instead of seeing them in the cool light of morning, they read the newspaper headlines and romanticise them into a melodrama. Dr Haseler—on the opposite wing of the Left from the Tribune Group—falls into the same trap. He envisages a future cast over with dark shadows. If Britain is not to become a People's Democracy by the early 1980s, he writes, "then some sort of conflict between Marxists and democrats is probably inevitable." We shall soon find out.

Dr Haseler has in mind, I think, a conflict that diverges from what has gone before. In a sense we have had a continuing 50-year-old conflict in this country between democrats and a group of extremists who call themselves Marxists and who believe in revolution. It has been a grimy and fragmented struggle. It has taken different forms at different times: parliamentary elections; court cases over trade-union ballot rigging; violent strike picketing; occasional street-fighting; trials of the agents of an unnamed power for espionage. It is not this mélange of skirmishes that he appears to prophesy for the future. He wants a fight-out over fundamentals. If not, then catastrophe. Little did the sober men of 1689 realise that their constitutional régime would last for two hundred and eighty-eight years before it was threatened with this imminent conclusion.

IT IS A THESIS in need of a conspiracy. It is possible —though highly unlikely—that "Marxism" will arrive quite unexpected through the contradictions of capitalism. It might be that economic forces beyond our control will take over.[1] I do not think that Dr Haseler has this in mind. His relegation of economics to a subordinate position in the explanation of our present plight tends to militate against this interpretation. Revolutions do sometimes occur without revolutionaries—the revolution in industrial societies that brings the USA and the USSR closer together in the technological bureaucracies that they embody. But it is not this sort of revolution that he fears. He fears a revolution of the classic kind. It might be a subtle ideological *coup d'état* or a palace game of musical chairs, rather than a full-blooded mutiny from below. But it is none the less a revolution that requires people to implement it out of their conscious wills. Countries do not arrive at police states by accident.

It has need of an adequate conspiracy theory because it is not immediately apparent that

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[1] Presumably those who follow the Marxist theory of history wish things to get worse, to intensify those "contradictions"—and those who advocate high welfare spending or unemployment benefits are just providing palliatives which obstruct that process. Wouldn't a large defence budget be the best Marxist Policy? Wouldn't it take money away from private capitalist investment without spending it on social palliatives?

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juvenile insurrectionists, trade-union bureaucrats, and hesitant parliamentary rebels—the real human stuff of which the British revolution is to be made—have a great deal in common. In the chess-game of "scenarios" all three elements, from the present state of Britain, would seem to be necessary. The insurrectionists, to give it the necessary dynamic; the trade-union leaders, to call on the massed armies of the proletariat; the parliamentarians, to present the attack on democracy with a vital front of respectability.

AS IT HAPPENS there has not been a single instance of a successful internal revolution from the Left in an advanced industrial society over the last hundred years. For an elucidating example of what could happen it is necessary to turn to the Nazi take-over in Germany; in which these three qualities—the youthful momentum of the Brownshirts, the mass drawing-power of Hitler's rhetoric, and the façade of constitutional legality —were effectively reconciled. But—one asks—where is the point of unity among the divergent forces in Britain?

Dr Haseler—like many others—uses the convenient covering term "Marxist" to denote the opponents of democracy from the Left. It is a thesis that has to be argued with the utmost dexterity. It requires a subtle sleight-of-hand. It requires the word "Marxist" to be used, at one moment, to describe those who believe in violent revolution and, at another, to designate those who are committed to the public ownership of the "commanding heights" of the means-of-production. There is, of course, an overlap—but the overlap is not large enough to be a plausible threat. The first use of the word is precise but does not draw the net widely enough; the second draws the net widely but provides no obvious danger to the continuance of our democracy. The Left have no particular reason to be satisfied with the old Herbert Morrison ideal of the centralised public corporation. Tony Benn especially advocates a policy which will try to combine public ownership with an effective wider democracy. The old principles of traditional socialism—nationalisation plus working-class power—are in direct contradiction. It is realised on the Left that they are in direct contradiction. Hasn't the new synthesis more in common with Syndicalism than with Marxist-Leninism? It is the workers' collective of Meriden, not the public corporation like the BBC, that furnishes the dream for the future.

WHAT COULD BRING the potential revolutionaries together? (1) It could be Moscow gold. As yet, no convincing evidence has been submitted. (Mr Ian Mikardo's trading activities in Eastern Europe have long since been forgotten.) (2) It could be the power-base of some fringe political party. At the moment there are six such parties and each claims to be the true heir of Karl Marx: the International Socialists; the International Marxist Group; the Socialist Party of Great Britain; the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist); the Communist Party; and the Workers' Revolutionary Party. They fight each other with fratricidal intensity. Could this be a stunt of huge proportions to disguise real comradeship? This is doubtful. (3) It could be the central organisation of the Tribune Group. Yet there does not seem to be much central organisation in the Tribune Group. There was a deep divide over whom to vote for in the recent Labour Party leadership elections—Michael Foot (who proclaimed his disinterest in victory) or Tony Benn (who has never been a member of the Group). Moreover, the Tribune Group at least officially lacks an extra-Parliamentary wing—it does not even have the association with some other national organisation that the moderates' Manifesto Group has with the Social Democratic Alliance.

REVOLUTIONS ARE violent affairs. The initial stages may be put through on the sly, but ultimately force is needed to maintain the *fait accompli*. Does the average British Marxist—the Marxist on the Clapham omnibus—have a gun in his garret? It would be interesting to know. Evidence is surely required of an Underground Red mafia, ready to use its weapons at a moment's command. Who is to provide the back-up strength? A defecting Sir Robert Mark? Jack Jones' old veterans of the International Brigade? Some strange fraternity of undergraduate Officers' Training Corps and the Militant cadres? Brigadier Kitson?

Dr Haseler appears to see the point of unity in the way that the members of the divergent groups are linked together by "the grip which Left totalitarian ideology impresses on their minds." He makes the error of supposing that a ruthless political theory, precisely by virtue of its ruthlessness, exerts a cohesive effect on its adherents. It is a curiously historicist way of looking at things. Men are bound from outside by "vast impersonal forces." Ruthlessness far from being just a necessary means—though regrettable—turns into an attractive end. The ideology with which the men of the Left are supposed to comfort themselves is not the milk of human kindness that we have been led to believe; it is not the docile principles of Equality and Fraternity that many argue are deceptively innocuous. Dr Haseler, on the contrary, argues that they confirm their commitment by a frank admission to them-

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selves of their own totalitarianism. They will advance to the barricades under the banner of the new commissar state. Dr Haseler's analysis of human motivation at least has the virtue of striking eccentricity.

He massively overrates the influence of ideology on British political behaviour. The Labour Party does not gain the support of its members from their assent to a series of propositional statements. That support originates in a whole network of obscure reasons—loyalties and connections that derive from class, family, locality, religion. There is little evidence that the Left of the party acts in the light of long-term manipulative purposes. It is chained to the totemism of personalities—from Keir Hardie to Nye Bevan—not the doctrine of historical materialism. It sees the past in terms of moral drama—the "treachery" of Ramsay MacDonald, the entry into its "inheritance" of 1945—not sociological law. Its actions reflect the traditional outlook of British radicalism, not the "specious metaphysics" of Marxism. The Tribune Group oppose public spending cuts—as Clem Attlee, or Oswald Mosley, or a host of others did in 1929–31. They propose import controls on manufactured commodities, as an attractive alternative to policies of greater economic harshness—as Joe Chamberlain did at the turn of the century. They denounce the military coup in Chile as Orwell denounced it in Spain. They campaigned against entry into the Common Market either as nationalists (just as Norman Angell campaigned against the secret continental diplomacy of Sir Edward Grey before the First World War) or because they feared high food prices (like John Bright when he fought the Corn Laws). They see defence expenditure as an obvious target at a time of budgetary restraint (as Gladstone did when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer). In fact, on a whole series of issues the responses of the Tribune Group—reactionary, short-sighted, naive, or chauvinist as they may have been—were and are traditional radical responses.

IT IS HARMFUL IF partisan differences—routine to the nature of a democracy—become constant debates about constitutional premises. Social Democrats should not make their objections to proposals from the Left—objections that rest on economic exigency or administrative undesirability—into charges of disrupting parliamentary democracy. It is possible to nationalise banks without nationalising political parties or newspapers as the example of France shows. It is possible to run Incomes Policies—voluntary or compulsory—by agreement between government and trade unions, without producing a corporatist state—as this country seems to be demonstrating (unless a corporatist state is defined as agreement between Government and the Trade Unions). It is even possible to have budgetary deficits and large-scale inflation—to have them on the grounds that they are preferable to other evils—without destroying parliamentary democracy (as the example of Israel indicates).

THE OUTSTANDING FEATURE of British society at the moment is not its standardised authoritarianism, but its pluralist variety. It is a country where strikes are induced less by conspiratorial Marxists than by wildcat anarchists. The outstanding feature of our state at the moment is not the concerted effort with which it attacks our freedom, but the rambling incoherence of its competing syndicates. It is a state where the Electricity Board competes with the Gas Board for customers; where local government refuses to carry out central government instructions to cut spending; where many Cabinet Ministers are paid to represent not the public interest but in effect sectional pressure groups (Scotland, Wales, Defence, Agriculture).

We are not in a situation of incipient absolutism. It is a state which lacks a governing intelligence—and has done so under different party administrations; the myth of the governing

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intelligence is, to borrow Koestler's phrase, a ghost in the machine.

It may even be that a little more absolutism is necessary to direct the pluralist variety into co-ordinated motion; just as a little more Marxist sociology on the Left of the Labour Party might counteract the incursions of romantic sentiment.

Of course, the friends of liberty must be perpetually vigilant—but not to the degree that they die of insomnia on night-duty. The chief danger of Dr Haseler's views is not that they will induce a witch-hunt. It is that they will provide a distraction which paralyses our capacity for necessary action where it matters. The real threat is not that in five or ten years' time the blood will flow in the streets or that the Reds—or the thugs—or the generals—will have taken over. The real threat is that we will be stagnant, exhausted, and lifeless. The blood is unlikely to flow in the streets; but it may clot in our veins.

Euro-Communist Ideology

Worrying about Stalinism

IT USED TO BE SAID that "Left could speak to Left"; but the lines of communication between Paris and Moscow have been running into a lot of static recently. Just the other day Soviet spokesmen, in a sharp if somewhat indirect propaganda offensive, ticked off the French Communist Party. The Moscow weekly *New Times* published a long article dealing with the history of the Communist Party as recorded in a new book by an official French Communist historian, Jean Elleinstein.

Elleinstein is, of course, a member of the Party, and its Director of Marxist Studies and Research. But he has already raised ideological eyebrows with his previous publications: a 4-volume *History of the USSR* and works entitled *The Stalinist Phenomenon* and *Thoughts about Stalinism*. As in his earlier writings M. Elleinstein tries in his history of the Party to confront certain "barbarous" realities about the epoch of Joseph Stalin as hero of world-communism. In one passage he observes:

> "... We want neither the Gulag Archipelago nor the prohibition of Art Exhibitions, neither a censorship of works of literature nor psychiatric clinics for political prisoners or persecution of Christians and Jews. We are prepared to condemn these phenomena with the same firmness as everybody else, although we do not reduce the whole of the reality of socialism in the East to these specific situations. . . ."

As a Marxist historian of Communism he argues that the Party leadership was excessively oriented to the Soviet Union. That is why, for example, the French Communists tended to dismiss ideals like Freedom and Democracy as "bourgeois conceptions." Perhaps this was understandable in the historic context of the Soviet Union where, after all, no libertarian tradition had existed. Even Lenin, as Elleinstein tries to prove, never pinned any hopes on a genuinely democratic development in Russia. But for France, with such a different national political tradition, this was unacceptable.

Such notions, for Soviet orthodox defenders so alert to "provocation", were very irritating in Moscow. Yury Sedow in *New Times* was annoyed at this attempt to confront "the notorious anti-Soviet slanders of the bourgeois ideologists." As usual, it is no accident, comrades, that such old chestnuts like "no democracy", "no freedom", and "the suppression of all those who think differently" keep on coming up in Elleinstein's work. Enough said: for a Soviet critic doesn't ever argue about such matters: he is a polemicist, and he simply attacks. But, of course, in this affair he is not simply attacking another somewhat mistaken individual author on historical subjects. Elleinstein's Party is in the midst of its new turn to the national traditions of just such "Freedom and Democracy", of a socialism which is draped in the French *tricolore*; and even if it shows signs of worrying about how far certain of its revisionist Marxist theoreticians can go, it must feel that here the Moscow polemic was really directed against the French Party leadership.

THE EDITORS OF *l'Humanité* are not exactly insensitive on such matters. But they have their special esoteric ways of dealing with such issues: that is to say, talk about the "form" of the problem, but not its "content." They took umbrage only at the *form* of the criticism from Russia. Why should criticism of fraternal parties be quickly interpreted as an insidious act of "anti-Communism"? If Moscow was bitter and hostile, Paris would remain polite and friendly. There are, I suspect, good reasons for this, not

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least those which have to do with Jean Elleinstein's embarrassing activities as a Marxist who thinks that problems should be analysed with a certain scientific detachment. This could be dangerous. It might even call into question the sincerity of the French Communist Party line at a delicate moment of history.

One revealing incident occurred recently on a discussion programme on French Television. One of the participants was Jean Kanapa, who is a major figure in the Party's ideological front. And he was faced, yet again, with the question of how it is that the Party now talks so much about "Freedom and Democracy" but in all the years—the decades!—gone by there had never been a word about "excesses." Kanapa's answer was simply that the French Communist Party, and its Central Committee, knew nothing of these things. The next day he gave an interview to *l'Humanité Dimanche* and went so far as to say:

> "If any Party had told us that this or that criminal trial had been arranged or manipulated, but that this condemnation of innocent persons was absolutely necessary in order to defend Socialism, we would have clearly cried out our indignation. . . ."

The situation was becoming psychologically, and indeed ideologically, interesting. A few days later *Le Monde* published a two-part article by Jean Elleinstein, based on a paper which he had given to a Paris meeting of the Institute of Slavic Studies. It took place in March 1976 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the historic 20th Congress during which Nikita Khrushchev had given his notorious "Secret Speech." Elleinstein wrote:

> ". . . The foreign Communist Parties were informed about Khrushchev's speech only at the very last minute. As far as the French delegation of Communists were concerned, it was given the text of the speech only on the morning after and then only on the condition that the text had to be returned by that evening and that nothing was to be said about it."

Elleinstein was faced by a *démenti* from the Party organ *l'Humanité* which claimed that he alone was responsible for his version of what happened.

THINGS WERE NOW just a little out of control. The left-wing weekly *Politique Hebdo* quickly added to the embarrassment. Jean Pronteau, who was once a member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, gave an account of a visit to Warsaw shortly after the 20th Congress. He went there to discuss Communist economic affairs, but the matter of the Khrushchev Speech came up, and indeed he was shown a copy of the text. When he returned to Paris he quickly asked to see Maurice Thorez, then the chief figure in the French Party. The conversation went as follows:

> PRONTEAU: I have just come back from Poland, and I have seen a copy of the Speech.
> THOREZ: The speech? What speech?
> PRONTEAU: The report which Khrushchev delivered behind closed doors, the Secret Speech.
> THOREZ: There is no secret speech.
> PRONTEAU: (*opens his briefcase and wants to begin reading . . .*)
> THOREZ: All right, then. You've got it. You could have said so right from the beginning. But remember one thing, this secret speech doesn't exist!

Well, the Party now had to bend its line a little, for it had no other course. In the middle of January the Politburo published a statement. Georges Coquiot and Pierre Doize, who are the only living members of the four-man delegation which went from Paris to the Moscow 20th Congress in 1956—both Maurice Thorez and Jacques Duclos have since died—declared that in point of fact a Russian text of the Khrushchev speech had been handed to them for a few hours. They had been warned at the time to treat the Report as "top secret" and to make no written notes of it.

> "In the conditions which governed the situation at that time, our Delegation felt that we had to oblige."

So who knew, or didn't know, what—and when—and why? How deep in the non-existentialist philosophy of French communism is the habit of believing in the existence or non-existence of realities according to the Party ideology of the day?

WHAT REMAINS TO BE SAID is only that it is now clear from the official declaration of the French Communist Party's Politburo that Jean Kanapa, in that television discussion before millions of viewers, had simply lied. What remains to be asked of other Communist leaders, now feeling differently "obliged" according to other conditions which govern other times, is whether the truthfulness of their new loyalties to freedom and democracy isn't under some small shadow, no bigger than a man's hand or, say, a clenched fist?

Harry Hamm

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Dangerous Pilgrimages

Transatlantic Images in Fiction (III)—By MALCOLM BRADBURY

But Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical association. There were to be seen the masterpieces of art, the refinements of highly-cultivated society, the quaint peculiarities of ancient and local custom. My native country was full of youthful promise: Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every mouldering stone was a chronicle. I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement—to tread, as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity—to loiter about the ruined castle—to meditate on the falling tower—to escape, in short, from the commonplace realities of the present, and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past.

Washington Irving
THE SKETCH-BOOK OF GEOFFREY CRAYON, GENT.
(1819)

"So you're going to Europe. Any special reason? Are you on a job? Or just running, as usual? You never go alone, always with some bim."

Saul Bellow
HUMBOLDT'S GIFT
(1975)

IF, AS I ARGUED in my previous article (ENCOUNTER, February), the European mind has invested, over the centuries, with a mixture of deep hope and due caution, in a complex image or fiction of America, then there can be no doubt that there has been a more than equal commerce in the other direction. "England to Europe: America to itself!" cried Tom Paine at the time of Independence, seeking to establish the separateness of American destiny. But no sooner was the New World born and politically distinct than it seemed that, by process of polarity, an Old World was needed—for contrast, to designate what was overthrown, and for complement, to designate what was absent. When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands that have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them—then, it appears, many cultural and psychological difficulties ensue. Political bonds may be broken; cultural bonds—those of language, racial stock, familial and ancestral connection—are tied somewhat tighter. It was the American business to reject the Europe from which it had originated, to assert the right to begin history over again; then, in course of time, to rediscover it, in many forms, but frequently in that special, half-imaginary way we bring back pasts we have discarded—our own rural one, for example—and then find we still need, for completion or reassurance. The United States, founded, in historical daylight, from European settlement and European ideas, indeed emerged from a sensibility of repudiation and connection. The double emotion was sustained by continuous emigration from Europe; this not only perpetuated but also vastly enlarged the geographic scale of the European connection. And even when history's promises were kept, and the New Nation was no longer colony, province or equal power, but a modern super-power larger in strength than what it had left behind, the enterprise still persisted. It is, indeed, with us still.

Thus, through the 200 years since Independence, when the American mind was busy making itself an America, it has also been marvellously busy making itself a Europe; a place sometimes only half-known to Europeans, but made visible when the tourists come, or when we open up a novel, such as Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), and find a Europe there. It is, as they say, no accident that London Bridge now stands in the Arizona desert, or that Disneyland—along with many an American campus—is abundant in those castles, cathedrals and mock-feudal remnants the new nation once decisively overthrew. Many different versions of what lies across the Atlantic have fed it, and it has been throughout an affair of mixed feelings: a "love-hate relation", as Stephen Spender puts it.[1] Like all such, it has deep psychic constituents: violent disaffiliation (Europeans did not go to America to have more of the same), but also renewed association. Nathaniel Hawthorne, American consul in Liverpool, that key port of entry for the European experience, in the 1850s, noted "the blind pathetic tendency to wander

1 Stephen Spender, *Love-Hate Relations: A Study of Anglo-American Sensibilities* (Hamish Hamilton, 1974).

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back again" that affected his compatriots, and from which he was not himself free. And many a modern American mind has been fuelled by the inner struggle between American allegiance and an atavistic "sense of a foreign world in my parents' lives" of which J. P. Donleavy has lately written.

Indeed, the psychology of double origin has been read as the defining characteristic of "Americanness." Americans have been long in quest of national identity; this, says David M. Potter, is because most of them are not ethnically rooted in the land in which they live.[2] Margaret Mead once remarked that all Americans are "third-generation", having a non-American and a part-American behind them; the psychology of assimilation has been crucial to them, and has much to do with that mixture of individualism and conformity, existential remaking yet desire for community, that lonely crowd sensibility, that many have found striking in American life.[3] As in so many matters, the definitions here come by polarisation: the taking of comparative bearings in geography and history. If Americans *have* regarded themselves as present-tense people, mobile, modern, freed and trapped by historical immediacy, produced by American abundance or the American frontier, they have contrasted themselves with a notional Europe where men lead *other* lives, defined by custom, tradition, ascription. Such polarities do not have to be exact (this one certainly gets less and less so) to be functional. The business of thinking in such polarities has been an important part of American self-knowledge; as James put it, the American complex fate. And of course the persistent other pole has been the European one; this has made Europe an enduring presence in the American experience, certainly until very recently.[4]

NOW ALL THIS HAS BEEN true in American life and American national psychology; but it has been especially true, and in part for distinctive reasons, in the arts—a realm in which

[2] David M. Potter, "The Quest for the National Character," in John Higham (ed.), *The Reconstruction of American History* (Hutchinson, 1962).

[3] Margaret Mead, *The American Character* (Penguin, 1944), originally published in the USA as *And Keep Your Powder Dry*.

[4] Melvin J. Lasky has valuable comments on the "pendulum-like shifts from a sense of American exceptionalism to a larger feeling of kinship with Europe" in "America and Europe: Transatlantic Images: II", ENCOUNTER, January 1962. Also see Cushing Strout, *The American Image of the Old World* (1963).

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cultural pressures and ethnic intersections tend to come to powerful focus. It was hardly surprising that, once Independence had been declared, the Americans would want a distinct and national artistic culture, generated from American themes on American soil, unmarked by colonial imposition. "America" said the lexicographer Noah Webster around the 1780s, "must be as independent in *literature* as she is in *politics*", and tried to help the affair by providing a dictionary of distinctively American English; writers began to populate their works with American materials. "Copy not from others,/ Shun the lures of Europe", advised Timothy Dwight—if in suspiciously English-sounding metrics—in a poem of 1794, sounding a separatist note that would long continue, in American literature as in American life; William Carlos Williams was more latterly to remind poets that Americans learned English from the mouths of Polish mothers.

The promises were there, and the age of Independence was one of romantic nationalism in the arts, with Herder and Mme de Stäel reinforcing the idea that national institutions made national arts. Bishop Berkeley's "Westward the course of empire takes its way" was much quoted, with its suggestion that the arts would move across readily to the American strand. Contemporary cultural historiography, drawing on Gibbon and Volnay, saw a rhythm of imperial rise and fall; this put Europe on the declining curve, America on the ascending one. Greece had yielded to Rome, Rome to Paris and London, and duly the European capitals would yield to the American ones. Unhappily, though, art *needed* capitals, and these were slow to evolve; they belonged to a late stage in the cycle. Indeed—and this would become an essential theme in the romance of Europe—ruin and high cultivation of the arts seemed to go together. America might be a romantic principle, with its nationalism, its open world of nature, its new men; it was also romanticism as yet unwritten. In the meantime, the United States was a notably bustling, actual, political society, more in need, as the Founding Fathers said, of the useful arts than the ornamental ones. There was also a suspicion, part puritan, part democratic, that the high arts were an aristocratic corruption; a feudal deposit, breeding evasion, solitude, inwardness, aesthetic snobbery.

One result of all this was that American writing was much more deeply concerned with nationality than most European writing—but that, almost by necessity, it was so concerned in an international context. We do right to explain its tradition, as so many critics have, in terms of its American themes, American forms, American diction and breath-rhythms, above all its American *myths*—its dreams of success, its Adamic or paradisial preoccupations, its fascination with the new man in the new land, its flight from the social toward the individual, its frontier motif. The very drive toward myth itself, toward the metaphysical, the romance, and the large cultural distillation, America as metaphor, was a move away from Europeanness in writing—away from those matters of class and social mores, from detailed social realism and preoccupation with liberal self-definition within society, that were irrelevant to a fluid, constantly altering, expanding America. Yet we do also need to recognise that there was quite as pervasive a myth that looked not onward and westward but backward and eastward; if there has been a deep myth of America in American writing, there has also been a powerful romance of Europe.

AND THIS, UNDOUBTEDLY, has to do with the recurrent motif of expatriation in American writing. For, to some degree, it came to seem as though Europe *was* art; hence the imagination was curiously and strangely affixed to what was being otherwise discarded. Europe became associated with the dark and disturbing secrets of both aesthetic and *fallen* experience. As a result many writers went on this ambiguous quest; almost every major 19th-century American writer, and a good many since, managed at least one European journey. Moreover it was usually an emblematic journey, turned into literature. Some were Grand Tours for sensibility's sake. Some were trips made the better to see America in perspective, in the spirit of Emerson's dictum that "We go to Europe to be Americanised." Some were a good deal more oblique and involved simultaneous gestures of both involvement and withdrawal, moves into a world that separated art from familiar life. Some had an even darker and more dissenting flavour, and were conceived as protest or retreat. There were writers who became persistent Atlantic travellers, needing two cultural milieux; some, like Henry Blake Fuller, wrote two totally different kinds of fiction—realism about the United States when in his hometown Chicago, romance about the past when in his expatriate Italy. There were others whose visits became mysteriously extended; even on occasion lifetime affairs, sometimes, as with James and Eliot, involving a change of nationality. And though all nations have such expatriates, Americans had more than most; moreover, precisely because they were moving against the historical tide—the huddled masses came westward for liberty and the future, while the writers and painters seemed to drift back again, into the past and the culture-religion—it

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all became an issue. Van Wyck Brooks once produced two linked books displaying two equally unfortunate fates: *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* was about the disaster, for a writer, of staying in America, where the material was thin and the critical standard soft; *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* was about the disaster of leaving it and losing one's literary roots.

Thus Europe entered the inner dialectic of the American arts; hence that salient fact of American fiction on which Harry Levin has remarked that "most of it is set in foreign parts", and that "nearly every important novelist has managed to write one expatriate novel."[5] It was, Levin notes, a refractive process, a way of distilling an image of America by indirection. One could urge that it is a way of letting American writers realise their full Americanness, find the intensity of their national theme; Harold T. McCarthy suggests this in his book *The Expatriate Perspective*.[6] But there was more to it than that alone, for the experience generated much ambiguity and mystery. It was especially a mystery about art, culture, tradition, and the fundamental sources of the imagination. The transatlantic voyage frequently became a metaphor for the relation between fact and art, the weight of reality and the claims of form and technique; thus Gertrude Stein, settled in Paris, explained that writers needed two countries, one to grow in and one to write in, adding "they could be dentists at home." This is the tension we know well from modern writing; Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* broods on the question. It indeed does have much to do with our sense of the modernity of American literature, which has been present at so many cultural feasts, and felt the formal and moral strain of being so. "There's no romance here but what you may have brought with you", says Ralph Touchett to Isabel Archer, just come to England, in James's *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881); many American writers knew as much. "I've brought a great deal, but it seems to me I've brought it to the right place", Isabel replies; many American writers, it seems, knew that too, and felt the pressing need for a world appropriate to the imagination, which is what you could make of Europe.

[5] Harry Levin, "Statues from Italy: *The Marble Faun*", in *Refractions: Essays in Comparative Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1966).

[6] Harold T. McCarthy, *The Expatriate Perspective: American Novelists and the Idea of America* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1974), which makes the case that expatriate novels—he deals with Cooper, Melville, Hawthorne, James, Twain, Cummings, Hemingway, Miller, Richard Wright and James Baldwin—"are part of a process by which these writers came to a realization of the nature of their Americanism."

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NOW ALL THIS is indeed part of the modern note of American writing, having much to do with its present cosmopolitanism, eclecticism, and its power to travel culturally. But it is, as I have said, an affair that goes back to the beginnings of an American national writing, and to the political and stylistic upheavals in which it emerged. For there were two revolutions, not unconnected: the American *and* the Romantic Revolution. Both made their serious claims on an American art. In Europe, it was the American motif that was strong; America offered a radical world for the romantic imagination to dwell upon, a place of new men and deep nature and changed sensibility. But romantic aesthetics were also concerned with the distillation of history and the past, with old folkways and traditions, with a nature governed by established meanings and associations, with the imagination charged into perception and morality by connection with such things. It is not entirely surprising that, much as European writers could use America for *their* acts of the imagination, many American writers should turn back to Europe for theirs.

This they did. Today we normally identify James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving as America's first two professional writers. They were products of the first post-revolutionary generation, born in the 1780s, and grew up in times when neo-classical ideas were shifting into romantic ones. Both were visitors to Europe as young men, though in rather different circumstances. Cooper visited England as a 17-year-old sailor on a merchantman in 1804, and found it chilly and inhospitable; Irving visited France, Spain, Italy, the Low Countries and England on a Grand Tour, taken for his health, in 1806, and found them rich in poetry and sensibility. Both were pushed into full-time writing by economic troubles following the renewed conflict with England, the War of 1812. Both were influenced by Scott and both had long periods of European expatriation leading to intricate European themes in their writings. Their fates were somewhat different. Both returned to America in the 1830s, when times had changed, Jacksonian egalitarianism dominant. Irving, despite a 17-year expatriation, was fêted, finally sent back to Europe not now as imaginative but as political ambassador—Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain. Cooper, who had meddled in Paris in political affairs (Irving had studiously avoided them), came back after 7 years to be violently attacked in the American press. He had, it was felt, become "Europeanised", an enemy to democratic change; certainly his later writing is fiercely critical of America. They ended up, then, with two different versions of Europe, two different forms of writing. But, between them, they romantically began the American romance of Europe.

Irving's adult visit to Europe began in 1815; by this time he had trained as a lawyer, written with some success, and paid some attention to the affairs of the family firm. This had a branch in Liverpool, badly affected by the War; Irving was sent to remedy matters. The firm went bankrupt; Irving seized the chance, refused to go home, and set out to live by writing in England. The situation was expansive, following the English popular shift to romanticism, the success of Byron and Scott. Over the next years he produced the two-volume *Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819, 1820), *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), and *Tales of a Traveller* (1824). They are works neatly angled at both an English and an American market, neatly polarising out elements of the international comparison favourable to each. Irving wrote in a healing, apolitical mode; he offered instead a sensibility. It was that of the traveller from the new land hunting the sensations only available in old ones. He was "Geoffrey Crayon", the amateur artist hunting every nook and cranny that called out a sensation and a sketch, and also the tourist needing and venerating the past. He wrote of stage-coaches and bumper Christmases, thatched cottages and squires, small fields invested with moral feeling and dark German forests invested with strange forces. He turned Europe's romanticism back on itself, by finding the history Europeans were coming to crave; then he placed it in a timeless, mythical past, beyond politics or process. There was no industrial revolution in Irving's world (though there are glimpses of commercial radicals like the banker Roscoe). There is no real suggestion, therefore, that England was not just America's past but its future: an urban and industrialising society entering a massive phase of expansion. It was what was half-fading that Irving isolated, along with a way of seeing it.

Most of Irving's sketches and tales in this phase were about Europe, but he did set a few of his pieces, now his most famous, in the States. "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" appeared in *The Sketch-Book*; they became American folklore. Actually they are efforts to transplant European romanticism to America, and are adaptations of German folk-tales, located in a "timeless" and also a Europeanised America. Irving explained (in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow") that he had set them in the Dutch-American villages on the Hudson because here

> population, manners and customs remain fixed; while the great torrent of migration and improvement, which is making such incessant changes in other parts of this restless country, sweeps by them unobserved. They are like those nooks of still water which border a rapid stream, where we may see the

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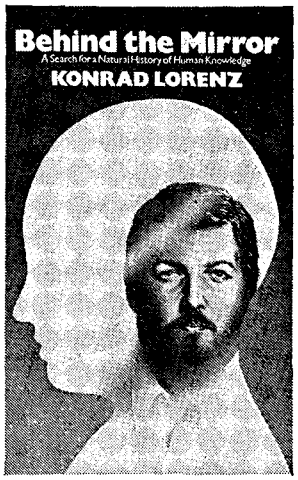
> straw and bubbles riding quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in their mimic harbour, undisturbed by the rush of passing current.

It is the apolitical sleepiness that makes for legend, though the "passing current" enters the stories. Rip sleeps his 20-year sleep through the American Revolution, to find, on return to his village, that the old timelessness has gone—politics and disputation have arrived. But he defeats it, by becoming himself a legend-maker, a teller of tales of the world before the war. Irving saw his task as "looking at things poetically rather than politically", so creating history as myth or legend. We can find much avoidance in this; Irving himself was conscious that it was a "light" romanticism, not much more than magic moonshine. Yet Irving does Americanise the tales, by giving them a note of scepticism, taking out explicit horror and mystery, offering possible rational explanations, suggesting that they are lies. And he succeeds in his aim of establishing American folklore: his peddlers, backwoodsmen, above all his Rip, the elusive male fleeing the woman for the woods, passed into the American stock.

COOPER DID NOT see history as legend or myth; this may explain why his chosen form was not the sketch but the novel. The son of a Federalist "squire" who settled a frontier township in upstate New York, he became a gentleman-landowner until economic troubles encouraged him to seek a living by writing. His first book imitated Jane Austen; but then he looked to Scott and the historical romance to help create American fiction. So came *The Spy*, set in the Revolutionary War; *The Pioneers*, about the settlement of the New York state frontier where he had grown up, introducing Leatherstocking; *The Pilot*, a sea-novel of the Revolution. We have come to see Cooper as a myth-maker, a legend creator, mostly because of the Leatherstocking saga, set in a frontier forest and prairie where his hero appears "in space", as R. W. B. Lewis puts it.[7] In fact his are historical novels in Lukacs' sense, set on the borders of ideologies, the points of change. This is one reason why Leatherstocking's frontier is also

[7] R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 91. Lewis argues that Leatherstocking is the "hero in space" because he "seems to take his start outside time, or on the very outer edges of it, so that his location is essentially in space alone"; moreover, "his initial habitat is space as spaciousness, as the unbounded, the area of total possibility." But he says that the sense of space asserts itself against onslaught by the assault of time.

METHUEN



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stocked with types more appropriate to East coast or European drawing rooms; the shadows of the next stage of civilisation cast their presence before. Leatherstocking is just one phase in a *process*; this is why Cooper is not a "timeless" writer like Irving—and why his Europe was very different.

It was in 1826—when he had written six novels and established an international reputation—that Cooper went to Europe, intending a 5-year Grand Tour. England he did not greatly like; Paris fitted his republican sentiments better. He toured most of the European countries, writing up his "Gleanings" in several books; he was tempted by the ruins that had tempted Irving. But the past that interested him was tied to the present; the Europe he wanted was not a timeless romance but a place of manners, forms, and institutions, an historical reality still in process. So Paris, with its literary scene, its political activity, and social complexity, the place where he could intervene in international affairs with Lafayette, or be admired for his Leatherstocking by Balzac, became his centre. His writing shifted appropriately; he wrote *The Prairie*, which mythicises Leatherstocking, so realistic a figure in the earlier *Pioneers*, from a European romantic distance; but then he turned to European subjects. Three historical novels—*The Bravo* (1832), *The Heidenmauer* (1832) and *The Headsman* (1833)—are set at crisis moments in the European past, where oligarchy and democracy contend; "the drift of the book is political", he noted in his preface to *The Bravo*. They are Republican novels, and they attack, too, Republican crimes, like slavery. This writing bodied out his sense of an historical process of which America was just one instance; it thus engaged with all those anxieties about the possibilities of and threats in republican democracy that would attract his comparative attention when he returned home.

THE BOOKS THAT FOLLOWED that return, in 1833, show how far Europe had taken Cooper. He had come to believe in the French "career open to talents", the ideal of the non-hereditary gentleman who represented the best in the culture. He had strengthened his belief in individual rights over those of the mob, come to hope for a critical society. He now saw the writer as one who stood outside his society and criticised it, from a position neither American nor European, but of supra-national assessment. A number of his later books are so constructed. *The Monikins* (1835) satirises both Leaphigh (England) *and* Leaplow (the States), hierarchy *and* levelling; the two linked novels *Homeward Bound* and *Home As Found* (both 1838) attentively examine American characters, manners and institutions from the standpoint of a civilised group of travellers, some of them Europeans visiting America, others "hadjis" returning to their native land after being exposed to foreign nations. They are sharp, exacting insights into American life—dissenting, critical texts, based on a fondness for an ideal democracy. Europe thus allows the writer to re-perceive America; in these books, Cooper could be said to have created the international novel. Thus in one generation, Irving had invented a psycho-geography for the American mind, granting it Europe seen as a continually enchanted past at work in the present, functioning both as escape from and imaginative perspective on the present, functioning much as the mediaeval past would for English Victorian poets; Poe had created a darker, stranger Europe of Gothicism and the psychic imagination; Cooper had evolved a Europe that could provide a political, moral and artistic contrast to America. All were versions of the European romance, and they deeply illuminated America. It is not surprising that the motif was passed on to the next generation of American writers.

THE NEXT GENERATION was, in fact, that remarkable one that F. O. Matthiessen once called "the American Renaissance", though they were more a Naissance—the generation of the 1840s and 1850s which evolved Transcendentalism, a vastly deepened perception of what an American and democratic Romanticism might be, and led the way toward a new cultural confidence. The two key figures in the novel were, of course, Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne, both writers of considerable nationalist passion—Melville was notably contemptuous of "literary flunkeyism" toward Europe—but with a dark, oblique, view of their own nation. They were bleak transcendentalists, critical of optimistic deliverances. And both of them turned toward the European theme to reassess it; Melville most notably in his earlier writing, Hawthorne most notably in his later work. Their versions were very different; so indeed was the character of their European visits. Melville, much like Cooper, had gone to England as a cabin boy following the disaster of his father's bankruptcy and the breakup of the family life; it was a first view of Europe from the underside. Hawthorne went to the same destination, Liverpool, but much later in life, and to a significant political office, that of American consul (where, among other things, he looked after the interests of unshipped sailors such as Melville had been). Both were attentive to the old myths of Europe; both sought to examine and transform them, and in so doing to ask essential questions about America and art.

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Melville wrote twice about England, in *Redburn* (1849) and *Israel Potter* (1855) (there are also stories, like *Billy Budd*, set in Europe). In the first (and better) book, Wellingborough Redburn, the central figure, is an obvious surrogate for the young Melville himself; he is a young man of genteel background who has come down in the world and has to adjust his illusions to its base realities, discover the harsh lessons of poverty and deprivation, put on the clothes of experience, which are ragged ones. His voyage to England on a hard ship is part of this process. Among his genteel illusions are a version of Europe; he carries with him his father's old guide-book, evidently a very Irvingesque document, recording a feudal and pastoral England. But its accounts do not fit what Redburn finds; he has come not as tourist but as victim. Nor does the English landscape square with the textual record. Liverpool is not an old city, but a new, modern Babylon, filled with disease, poverty and starvation. Redburn tries to mesh image and reality:

> Ah me, and ten times alas! [he cries] am I to visit Old England in vain? In the land of Thomas-à-Becket and stout John of Gaunt, not to catch the least glimpse of priory or castle? Is there nothing in all the British Empire but these smoky ranges of old shops and warehouses? Is Liverpool but a brick-kiln? 'Tis a deceit—a gull—a sham—a hoax!

The hoax is, of course, of his own making; but *Redburn* is also about all innocent illusions and about false maps of the world. Wellingborough travels with a myth, and ends with a disconfirmation. It is an American myth, and the subversion of it goes deep: Melville was the first American novelist to portray Europe, here England, not as the reassuring rural past but the threatening industrial future.

BUT REDBURN IS NOT JUST a lesson in the corruptions of Europe, which might be avoided by returning home. In fact Europe is a metaphysical landscape, a lesson in the human lot, in the dark underside that is there in all myths. Certainly hierarchy and division are greater in England than in America, the cities larger, the poverty worse. But, Redburn notes, Liverpool was "very much such a place as New York." These cities are in fact part of one world, the world of money and trade, Christianity and Mammon. There are two voyages in the book: the outward trip into the dark chaos beneath the European romance; the return one into the dark chaos underlying the American dream of liberty. The returning ship is packed with Irish emigrants moving from Europe's poverties to America's hopes. But conditions are horrific; a corpse has been smuggled on the ship; a number of the emigrants

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EDITED BY H. J. DYOS and MICHAEL WOLFF

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die on the voyage; the rest come to an America as commercial and profit-hungry as the lands they have left. The dark, deathly European secret is in the States too. Indeed for Melville the great contrast is not between America and Europe, but between the 18th-century ideals of agrarianism and libertarianism and the actual, iron, industrial city of modern life, with its heartless commerce. He does quietly celebrate the mythical America, but undercuts it with the real one. The lesson is one in the dark truth underlying all bright fancies; we live in a dark cipher of a world, where most fictions lead us not into but past the true experience.

Redburn is thus a quest into the paradox of myths and images as such. This was the preoccupation Melville shared with his friend Hawthorne, though Hawthorne perceived the matter differently. For it was the actual world that for him obstructed imagination, art, human comprehension; the artist's task to penetrate beyond it. Not surprisingly, this idea too became associated with Europe. The role of the imagination in America's Puritan society was Hawthorne's central theme. It forms the matter of his first great novel, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), a book that, as Hawthorne explains in his "Custom-House" preface, was wrested from a struggle with an American reality so public, commonplace, insistent it seemed to deny art. Fortunately the imagination can wander backward into the past, though that past—the world of 17th-century Puritan Boston, an iron world where religion and law coincide, where imagination is held within the bounds of ideology—simply re-poses the problem. So Hawthorne creates two alternatives to his rigid, steeple-hatted Boston: to the west, the romantic wilderness, where one might look for a personal individual consecration; to the east, the alternative society, the world of cavalier Europe, where denser human options are available. Hawthorne blocks both of these paths to his characters; society, after all, demands its testimony. But Hawthorne, in his preface, recognises the need for oscillation: the actual needs the imaginary, the public needs the private, the fact needs the fiction, the puritan needs the exotic. Hawthorne himself spent his life in alternating phases, now working in public offices, now writing in solitude. The result was a guilt and a perplexity, which goes on to form, not just the pattern of his life, but the theme of his writing; his next two novels, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) both show the conflicts of "fleeting" present and past, public life and solitude, the pressing engine of the historical process and the need for aesthetic timelessness.

IT WAS NOW, with three fine novels written, that a campaign biography of Franklin Pierce earned Hawthorne a higher public office: the consulship in Liverpool. It was a typically paradoxical situation for him; he was going to the Europe he associated with artistic and historical density, the world beyond the public and the commonplace, but going to a busy political office. Hawthorne was in Liverpool from 1853 to 1857. His burst of creativity faltered under the demands of office. Though he planned out two romances about England, *The Ancestral Footstep* and *Doctor Grimshawe's Secret*, both on the theme of the American's atavistic yearning for his heritage, he took them back to America unfinished, and there "the Present, the Immediate, the Actual . . . proved too potent for me." Instead he produced, from his notebooks and the material he had gathered round the stories, a documentary work, *Our Old Home* (1863)—which reveals his constant oscillation between love of America and dislike for it, dislike for England and love of it; between the claims of a stable and hereditary principle, "the print of a recollection in some ancestral mind", and those of an ever-fluid and changing United States where the past is destroyed in the rush. But the European temptations were deep; Hawthorne almost settled there. And his European visit did finally produce its book. For, in 1858, his term of consulship over, he went on to Italy, spending 17 months in Florence and Rome, meeting expatriate American painters and artists, finding now an aesthetic, not a commercial, Europe. The old polarities of the America-Europe affair became sharpened for him in Italy's golden clime. America was present-tense, future-facing, puritan, innocent and real; Europe was past-tense, history-encompassing, Catholic, corrupt and romantic. But the quest from actuality to imagination, from innocence to experience, from puritanism to art, was crucial to him; out of this he made his book.

It was *The Marble Faun* (1860), his last and most abstract work. He reflected in the preface on the need for romance to have "a sort of poetic or fairy precinct, where actualities would not be so terribly insisted on as they are, and must needs be, in America", and on the problems of producing it where there is "no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land." It is the familiar litany; the distinctive Hawthorne note is that this makes art an anxious and dangerous affair. And that is the theme of the novel. For art here becomes associated with experience, experience with a corrupted and fallen world the fall with the great moral

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question facing Americans: whether man *can* live in innocence. Italy with its many meanings—its associations with the Golden Age, with Classicism, with Catholicism and Gothic strangeness, finally with the past and present of art—becomes fit setting for the question. The fall is re-enacted; the "faun" Donatello, who clusters all these associations, passes from animal innocence into self-conscious human sin. Hawthorne raises the question of whether it is fortunate or not, posing it through two American artists who represent different visions. They are that necessary Victorian pair, the fair lady and the dark one. One is Hilda, the copyist, with her doves and her white purity, fearful of corrupting itself; the other is Miriam, the romantic, immersing herself in the doctrine of life of experience, desiring to bring "a simple and imperfect Nature to the point of feeling and intelligence."

NATURE AND ART, Innocence and Experience, Morality and Aesthetics, contend: a key Victorian theme (George Eliot tackles it in *Middlemarch*) sharpened by the fact that here the forces are those of Puritan America and Catholic Europe, plain modern life and an Italy dense, aesthetic and corrupt—Rome is "that central clime, whither the eyes and heart of every artist turn", but is also thick with "the smell of ruin and decaying generations." In the end, Miriam becomes a penitent, and Hilda returns, with her friend Kenyon, to America's puritan and artless shore. But Hawthorne does not quite go all the way with her. He finishes his book (if ambiguously, so that it needed a second conclusion) and does so not in Italy's golden air, nor in America's plain light of day, but in a middle settlement—in England, indeed by "the broad and dreary sands of Redcar, with the grey German ocean tumbling in upon me, and the northern blast always howling in my ears. . . ." Like Henry James, later on, Hawthorne resolves his landscape of division—reality and art, morality and experience—by dividing up his Europe and making England a land where reconciliations are possible. Like Melville, he questions his own myth, and like him he brings new uncertainties and complexities into the European motif, creating a paradoxical setting in which beauty and art become themselves equivocal, in which art and reality diverge. In fact we can see in Hawthorne and Melville's European words a legacy that passes on, in turn, to the writers who succeeded them, and faced the social, cultural and mental turmoils produced by that great chasm that now divided American life, the Civil War. It was a legacy of sceptical realism, in-

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tensified by the industrialism and expansionism of post-war America, that was yet drawn back toward the spirit of romance, which would now be increasingly dislocated from the hard facts of new American life in a modernising, commercialising world.

NOT TOO LONG AFTER the Civil War was over, a new American writer noticed and ironically took part in a new popular movement:

> Everybody was going to Europe—I, too, was going to Europe. Everybody was going to the famous Paris Exposition—I, too, was going to the Paris Exposition. The steamship lines were carrying Americans out of the various ports of the country at the rate of four or five thousand a week in the aggregate. If I met a dozen individuals during that month who were not going to Europe directly, I have no distinct remembrance of it now.

This is, of course, Mark Twain, setting off on his voyage on *The Quaker City* in *The Innocents Abroad, Or the New Pilgrim's Progress* (1869), the book which settled his public reputation as an iconoclast, a realist, an American vernacular voice. His aim in the book was, he said, to suggest to the reader "how *he* would be likely to see Europe and the East if he looked at them with his own eyes instead of those who traveled in those countries before him." Like Melville, he mocked old guidebooks and the culture-religion, drawing attention to the dirty state of Leonardo's "Last Supper" and much else in Europe. Even stronger, though, is the mockery of the culture-vultures themselves, the pious and wealthy Brooklynites off to find religious origins in Europe and the Holy Land. We now take Twain as the voice of the frontier and Mississippi valley world he wrote much about; but time and again in his writing that world intersects with Europe, in the mock-European Duke and King of *Huckleberry Finn*, or the European twins of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. (He indeed took Huck Finn off to Europe in a late novel.) It was very consciously the encounter of the west and the east; *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court* (1889), his most complete fiction on the matter, may take an entrepreneurial, technological New Englander, Hank Morgan, back into feudal Europe, but he promptly affects the western style, enjoying "the cowboy business."

The point was to distil the freshness and democracy of American values, to appear as the frank and naughty boy at the cultural feasts; Hank Morgan, translated to King Arthur's Court, soon has the knights riding bicycles, wearing advertising slogans, cut down to democratic size. Twain was assaulting the chivalric and feudal fantasies that had, he thought, encouraged the South in the Civil War, and the literary dreams of Tennyson and the Pre-Raphaelites, setting their science-fiction, their social critique, in the medieval past. Through Hank Morgan, Twain celebrated the American present. Hank possesses western dreams, technological knowhow, democratic passions; he seeks to bring the Arthurians out of their dark-age ignorance, to reform despotism, abolish slavery, defeat the influence of magic and the church. Yet, as the book goes on, Twain's sympathies shift. He seems to become more engrossed in his Arthurian England; less impressed with the democratic, technical salvation. When, at the end, Hank begins electrocuting the knights and destroying everyone in an all too modern technological overkill, it is the past that criticises the sin and vanity of the present, criticises harsh, modern America. In all Twain's dealings with Europe, this ambiguity of feeling was present. Iconoclasm secreted its element of veneration, rejection a desire to be included; Europe touched on his doubt about America. Indeed he spent some 11 years of his life in Europe; thought, after getting his honorary degree from Oxford, of settling in England; greatly enjoyed Germany; and in Florence wrote *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, an evidently expatriate novel, taking a very long, European distance on the Mississippi Valley world from which Twain had started.

There were, it seemed, two routes to Europe in post-Civil War America. One was the western one—followed also by Artemus Ward, who edited *Punch*; Stephen Crane, who wore a six-gun at Brede Place, his expatriate home in Sussex; Ezra Pound, who emphasised his American drawl and Whitmanesque manner (so that Gertrude Stein called him "a village explainer"); Ernest Hemingway, the woodsman come to fish good in Spain. It was a way of taking the American vernacular and the innocent vision to the citadel, of finding that Emperors have no clothes—yet the citadel also offered a criticism of the provincial and local perspective, and enabled it to be seen with clearer eyes. The other path was the eastern one; that of the inheritors of the now displaced New England tradition, culturally uneasy in a world of unrestrained capitalism, political corruption, immigrant influx, and Gilded Age vulgarity. These writers often looked aesthetically to Europe, seeking both intensity of artistic experience and a social milieu in which it was credited. They formed significant expatriate colonies in London and Paris and Italy, and included Logan Pearsall Smith, Berenson, Santayana, and, of course, the novelists Henry James and Edith Wharton.

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JAMES REPRESENTED the opposite wing of realism to Twain—the paleface to his redskin, as Philip Rahv put it, the critical to his celebratory. It was James's case that realism could not flourish in America, that it took a complex social machinery to set a novelist into motion, that American culture was split between the material and the abstract, that it could yield its secrets only to the really grasping imagination. He said most of this to William Dean Howells, who represented the middle position between James and Twain. Howells had had his own dealings with Europe; like Hawthorne, he had been rewarded for a campaign biography, of Lincoln, with a consulship, in Venice. Here he generated several Italian novels, contrasting American plainness with European aesthetic opportunity, felt tempted to settle, but elected, finally, *for* the American plainness, which became his subject. Realism was the expression of democratic principles, the smiling aspects of American life. When James argued that it was on "manners, customs, usages, habits, forms" that the novelist lived, Howells disagreed; it was the American want of these things that made the task of the writer in the States so interesting. To James it left a void, a thin soil for art; Europe was the necessary emendation, the cultural embodiment. "My choice is the Old World—my choice, my need, my life", he noted after settling in London in 1876.

For James, then, Europe was not just an abstract romance. In fact his task was to pass beyond the abstraction and want of solidity he found in the United States; solidity of specification, realism as a mesh of aesthetic and moral form, was the end in view. His early writings from the 1870s—*A Passionate Pilgrim and Other Tales* (1875), with stories set in England, France, Italy, his three essential parishes, and dealing with the ancestral claim, the alliance of American wealth with European title, and the sense of artistic disinheritance answered to by Italy, his three essential themes; *Roderick Hudson* (1876), *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* (1878) and the life of *Hawthorne* (1879)—are all anxious probings of the international theme, emendations of the polarities we have already seen, carefully mediated, though, into the lower mode of realism. James credits *part* of the romance; *Roderick Hudson*, for example, alludes very specifically to Hawthorne's mythology, but brings it all closer to experienced fact. The larger mythologies—Hudson's need to drink the cup of experience and art in Italy, Christopher Newman's need for the great European world which seeks to reject him, the simplicity and innocence of Americans encountering the sophistications and densities of Europeans—persist. Culture

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and art *are* in Europe. But mistaken romanticism is usually disastrous, and many defeats are suffered in Europe's ambiguous air; simultaneously, the novel-form itself is shown struggling against the temptation in romance to cut free, to move away from accurately registered life. It was James's famous "international theme", about which so much has been written. The fascinating thing about it is James's development of it into a persistent process of complication, so that it ends the day not as a simple polarisation but a complex funding, not as an expectant social realism but as a modernist form of fiction.[8]

THUS, AS TIME WENT ON, Europe turned for James from being an "enlarged and uplifted gape" into "a banquet of initiation which was in the event to prolong itself through years and years." The main principle of his method was contrast: contrast he saw as the essence of fiction; and no contrast was, he said, greater than that one encountered "when we turn back and forth between the distinctively American and the distinctively European outlook." If we can make fiction out of the manners of one culture, what may we not do when several cultures are thrown into conjunction, so to illuminate and explore one another? One consequence is that the novelist will be pushed into ever more cosmopolitan awareness. So, in the opening satirical chapter of *The American*, Newman is judged against the European scale, while in *An International Episode* Lord Lambeth is judged against the American; the novelist, standing beyond both perspectives, is gradually forced into a larger posture for encompassing the experience he records.

Finally James dropped the direct theme ("America fails for me", he said) and concentrated on London; then for a while he dropped the novel itself, unsuccessfully attempting the theatre. At the end of the 1890s, however, all the issues returned. James came back to the novel, and questioned the social and moral realism he had supported. He was preoccupied now with dramatic forms of presentation, angles of vision, modes of perception, motions of consciousness. Above all, though, he was concerned with the gap that was opening, in the radical mental upheavals of the 1890s, between the psychological and the material world; this affected the centre of his realism. Indeed the three great works of this famous "late phase"—*The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904)—we today recognise as modernist texts, deeply experimental ventures. This is partly because, in these books, the life of mind seems severed from the massive, gross world of things; mind can only sacrifice itself to the material or pursue detachment. Form now has to struggle to shape life. But in a connected way the international theme returns, to obsess him afresh. The hard material face he found now in Europe meant, he said, that it "had ceased to be romantic to me." Yet much the same is true of the image of America in these books. For in them the old contrast with an innocent, pristine America has gone. Indeed it is now the Europeans—like Prince Amerigo, with his ambiguous name, Italian origin, and status as an American "purchase"—that seem the more innocent. James would have liked to find the lost romance in America, but his visit of 1904 proved disillusioning. He found largely a world of Mammon towers and hotel civilisation; the old international romance had withered at both poles.

JAMES THUS REPRESENTS the peak of the cosmopolitan vein in American fiction, at the end of the 19th century, and its turning point, with the beginning of the 20th century. His earlier books present an old, cultured Europe, containing an element of dangerous knowledge, yet justifying a degree of romance. His later works present a new, raw one, material in the way the world had become material, justifying only an aesthetic isolationism. He had become the witness to a collapse within European cultural confidence itself. He attempted to warn other writers of this, like Henry Harland, or Edith Wharton, whose first novel was in the form of that fashionable enterprise the Italian romance. "Do New York", he told Mrs Wharton, and she turned to the contemporary alternative: a naturalist work set in America, *Ethan Frome*. She thus came to write of an America undergoing modern change, writing a record of new money and vulgarity and the tragedies of seriousness. But the theme called up Europe again. *The Custom of the Country* (1913) is a contemporary tale (later to influence Scott Fitzgerald) of the modern, vulgar, cash-hungry American girl, Undine Spragg, who uses the custom of the country—divorce—to breach the European citadel; the one defeat Europe can offer her is to refuse to take a divorced woman as ambassadress. And only by setting *The Age of Innocence* (1920) in the *past* can she realise the essential contrast—between a Gilded Age America where old cultivated values are displaced by new cash, and where Europe comes to represent the density and the sexual

[8] There are important comments on all this in Marius Bewley, *The Complex Fate* (Chatto, 1952), as well as in Christof Wegelin, *The Images of Europe in Henry James* (Southern Methodist University Press, 1958).

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freedom the most sensitive characters desire.

Edith Wharton offered a late, qualified replay of the old Jamesian theme. But Gertrude Stein—who like Mrs Wharton settled in prewar Paris, but chose the Paris of bohemia rather than that of cultured society—found a different lesson in his work. She read the late James, recognised the "future feeling" in it, and the aesthetic novelty Europe had drawn him into. Europe meant the place of technical innovation, became purely aesthetic, a place of form rather than content. Her writing—*The Making of Americans* (1925), for example, written 1906–8—captures the techniques of European cubism in painting for exploring the American space-time continuum in prose. Europe thus offered the technical means and distance for a new writing about America. And this was a lesson she was to pass on to other American writers when she became a guru in 1920s expatriate Paris, the bohemian city which increasingly became the focus of American artistic attention as the traditional cultural Europe faded from sight.

THE ARTISTIC SIGNIFICANCE of Europe was thus significantly changing before the First World War. But of course it was above all the war itself that projected a new image of Europe into American consciousness. It was America's first direct involvement with the territorial and imperial conflicts of Europe; it was both a threat to its political innocence and a sign of its new weight in the balance of power. It involved, as Europe always had, both the notion of experience and the fear of being corrupted; Europe was both the traditional civilisation, worthy of being defended, and the wicked rivalries of past institutions, calling for reform. The many writers and would-be writers who were drawn over (it was a very literary battlefield, with many young Americans there as ambulance drivers, Jamesian enlightened watchers in a new role) were involved in an encounter with both the old cultural Europe and the reality and horror of its destruction: a double experience of experience. John Dos Passos makes this relation between a response to artistic values and a response to destruction the theme of his *One Man's Initiation: 1917* (1920), one of the first of the many European war novels that became such a key American genre in the 1920s. It was a theme to which he kept returning, each new version forcing a more experimental posture, a greater detachment, a larger historical portrait. *Three Soldiers* (1922) explores the destructive pressure of the military machine, the loss of individuality; *USA* (1937) puts the European war at the centre of an historical portrait in which modern progressive

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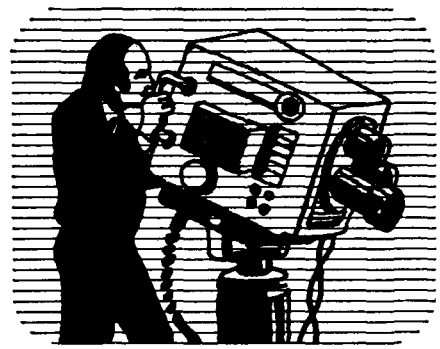

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hope fails and the American dream collapses.[9]

The war in fact acquired a central significance in American writing, and helped bring into it a naturalist view of death, a sense of chaos and contingency, an awareness of rhetorical falsehood, induced by a feeling that American innocence had ended along with the European tradition of culture.[10] And the collapse of the old cultural and social codes and mythologies became a central theme in American war writing. In E. E. Cummings' *The Enormous Room* (1922), for example, it becomes a conflict between official values and the anarchistic individualist response. In Hemingway's stories of the war, and in his novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), the loss of the old codes of glory, sacrifice and civilisation demands a separate peace, a new emotional economy, the discovery of the primitive things of self that one cannot lose, finally a new, reduced, literary style. Americans have always reflected Europe back on to itself, but in their own way; the image of a post-cultural, dark, waste-land Europe became a key moment in the American record, *and* the European sensibility. But a new image of Europe took its place, of Europe as the modern denuded world; and it was of sufficient power to draw many American writers back into Europe in the 1920s, when Paris became the centre of the American *avant-garde* arts. This was partly because it represented the place of lost cultural direction, social turbulence, economic chaos, *and* great aesthetic excitement. Europe was *still* experience. For a line had been drawn across history, cutting off the past from the present; the marks were to be seen not in the American small-town but in the European capitals. As Thomas Wolfe put it, you can't go home again (though most of these writers shortly did); the modern loss and nausea was a true lesson in life, and it was in Europe that you found it.

THUS THE EUROPEAN WAR novel was followed by the European *post*war novel, which explored the postwar expatriate scene, Americans seeking drink and experience, art and anguish, in the cafés and ateliers of Montparnasse against the background of a lapsed Europe. The classic text was Hemingway's "lost generation" novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), which examines the fun-and-anguish of a generation disaffiliated from old values by the war—though also depicts a deeper Paris, a more primitive Spain, where the agony can be redeemed by action. It was a fable that took on yet bleaker overtones in Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* (1934); his is a down-and-out Paris, a world of cheque-less expatriates, international bums and whores, a sewer of experience in which all illusions are destroyed. It is a cancer, but the world is a cancer, drowning in its dirt, and the Parisian cancer is honest and has vital parts, a new life of anarchy secreted in the chaos, unlike the American "air-conditioned nightmare." But the most notable treatment of all is Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* (1934), which looks at the world of the displaced American rich, trying to use Europe to last out on exhausted moral capital. At the centre is the innocent Dick Diver, the price of whose American intactness is his incompleteness. It is he who tries to sustain the romance of life in Europe, create an illusion for others. In the end, he is forced to dive in, immerse and complete himself in the psycho-pathology of a western culture in a phase of late decline. American wealth creates the moral chaos; Europe provides the beaches and the sanatoria, the cafés and the hotels, that represent the bankrupted modern history that has to be faced. The Europe that appears to serve the illusion in fact becomes the field of disillusion: a new form of experience.

IT SEEMED THEN that, if America now had little of its innocence to bring to Europe, Europe now had little of its culture to return to them. It was a place of dark disillusion to set against the American dream, and a metaphor with which to doubt it. Fascism, economic turmoil, and another war followed; this time it was all differently reported in American fiction. No longer was the war a struggle to save civilisation; no longer was the experience of war one of reality mixed with disillusionment. Most of the post Second World War novels about Europe are records of battle and occupation, of military system struggling against chaos to create more chaos, of totalitarianism used to meet totalitarianism. "I saw that we could prate of the evils of fascism, yet be just as ruthless as Fascists with people who'd already been pushed around", notes John Horne Burns in his Italian war-sketches in *The Gallery* (1947). With American innocence only a form of violence, the contrast was of European decadence and American absurdity; this was to be the theme of that late, remarkable example of the genre, Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961), which can see Rome, the eternal city, only as a dark purgatorio,

[9] I have explored this matter much more fully in "The Denuded Place: War and Form in *Parade's End* and *USA*", in Holger Klein (ed.), *The First World War in Fiction* (Macmillan, 1976). Also see on the same matter Frederick J. Hoffman, *The Mortal No: Death and the Modern Imagination* (Princeton University Press, 1964).

[10] John McCormick, in *Fiction as Knowledge: The Modern Post-Romantic Novel* (Rutgers University Press, 1975), has many invaluable comments on the effect of war on modern style and valuably links what was happening in American fiction with what was happening in European.

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a place of black-marketing, bodies for sale, "tragic vexation", exploiting and in its turn exploited by the American war-machine which superimposes on the old geography a map of mad systems and of bombing missions.

The theme of European darkness, usually seen as a facet of America's disturbing, exploitative, uninnocent innocence, has now become a common affair in more recent treatments of Europe in American writing, and it has had its challenging, even redemptive, associations. In *Giovanni's Room* (1956) there is a hope of European sanctuary for the homosexual outcast, struggling against American simplicities; in J. P. Donleavy's Irish novels, Dublin is a place of anarchistic romp for the displaced American, hunting vitality between money and death. In Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), the hero finds a dark, disturbing shore of experience late in his quest to be a latter-day Columbus; in Bernard Malamud's *Pictures of Fidelman* (1969), Fidelman comes, the Jew in the wake of Hawthorne and James, to find art out of decadence, but finds more decadence than art, though a strange new self does emerge from it. In John Hawkes's *The Lime Twig* (1960), a totally imaginary wartime London, as Gothic as Poe's Europe, affords modern mythic stuff for a psychic fable; in Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), the same blitz London becomes surreal, fabulous territory for an elaborate speculation into modern technological chaos and entropy. In all these, the old motifs have a secret existence; the decadent and darker version predominates; it then feeds back into a challenge to America. Still, if in self-conscious, ironic, modernised form, the old fable goes on. It seems a necessary aspect of the American imagination; and even the European mind must find it instructive.

Writing like Tickling

On Noël Coward—By GUIDO ALMANSI

FOR A FOREIGNER like myself, the immense greed of the British reading public for biographies of any type is one of the mysterious phenomena which take place in this inscrutable land of yours. The same people who would never go beyond the stage of a "Good morning, what a nice day!" with their closest neighbours are willing to go to any length in order to search the drawers in the private desk of a mistress of George IV. A British gentleman would never ask a friend about the latter's religious or political allegiance since the query would be indiscreet. Yet the same gentleman would spend £7.50 in order to discover the colour of Mary Montague's petticoats or Noël Coward's favourite scarf. He would fold over the lobes of his ears in order not to overhear a fragment of conversation in the London underground, and yet he would eagerly peruse a book where one can eavesdrop on the following exchange between Noël Coward and a lady called Gladys Calthorp, in the Grand Hotel at Alassio, on the Italian riviera, January 1920: "What exactly is the matter with Aunt Cordelia?" "She had a little sort of stroky thing, you know." Fifteen years of residence in this country have not really altered the state of bewilderment which overtook me when I first alighted from a train in Victoria Station.

But leaving aside the problem as to whether biographies are entertaining and worth reading—I am not even ready to discuss the question of their congenital unreliability—why should one read the biographies of literary figures? Jack the Ripper must have led quite an interesting life, and so has Cromwell, or Alexander the Great, Monsieur Landru or Charles Lindbergh, Christopher Columbus or Adolf Hitler. In comparison the writers I happen to know seem to be rather dull and lead unexciting lives. Yet the biographical facts of literary figures must be an inexhaustible source of interest for every reader of a respectable Sunday paper since its pages overflow with anecdotal information about them. The life of Shelley is certainly more popular than his poems; people are more familiar with the household details of Somerset Maugham ("what did he like for breakfast in the summer?") than with his work. Walk in any bookshop and you are likely to find four or five different lengthy versions of the life of Charles Dodgson, alias Lewis Carroll, and not a single copy of his complete works.

EVEN ACCEPTING the implicit interest of a literary or artistic biography, why Noël Coward? And why Noël Coward reconstructed

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from the inside of his elegant home with the tit-bits provided by his secretary-chauffeur-companion?[1] The mind wavers at the thought of a publishing industry which promotes such a book, of a literary establishment which clamorously launches it with a number of prominent reviews, of a reading public which welcomes this sort of gossipy titillation. "Tuesday and Wednesday: Darling, I've been shopping all day, things for Ned's Davos Christmas Tree—The shops are lovely—I'm looking out for a nice winter coat for you . . . it's a lovely city, enormous squares and buildings and general grandeur." I'm sure my readers will be anxious to know who this Ned is whose Christmas Tree of 1923 was going to be bedecked with such unexpected gifts. Well, his name was Ned Lathom, and we learn quite a lot about him and his friendship with Snoop, which was at the time the intimate nickname of Noël, both from the informal gossip provided by the inquisitive scribe and the hard facts of the private letters dug out with scholarly endeavour by the conscientious biographer: "Monday night: Just a line before I go to sleep—*Madame Pompadour* had *divine* music, I bought the score for 1/6. Today I got a huge bottle of hairwash for three pence—I've just come in from the Opera—your beloved *Tosca*—I've never heard it so well done—it was *enchanting*. Good night, my lamb! Snoop." If Cole Lesley's was an article two or three pages long, it might have been quite amusing as an unintentional parody written by an innocent abroad in the world of letters. But it goes on for 486 pages plus a 12-page index; it is selling very well and apparently it is even *read* by some purchasers. It is clear that the innocent abroad is not Cole Lesley but your reviewer.

What really surprises me is the fact that several biographies of Noël Coward have already appeared—quite apart from his autobiographical works; and yet one finds very little in terms of a critical appreciation of Coward's work as a playwright. While preparing an anthology of his plays for a foreign publisher, I found it easy to learn a great deal about Coward's sartorial and gastronomic habits. The last time he condescended to travel second-class on a train or transatlantic liner is lovingly recorded, but there is very little about his plays. In some odd way, Coward is one of the major British playwrights of this century—yet there is not a single work which takes his comedies seriously. In spite of the intolerable veneer of Upper Crust worldliness that Coward himself has helped to spread all over his works, his major plays however are still available to us, as the recent production of *Blithe Spirit* (1941) by Harold Pinter at the National Theatre has attempted to demonstrate.

Pinter's Coward must have been like the last adventure of the libertine, which is bound to be chastity. At the close of every period of experimentation we are faced by the final temptation, which is the experiment to abandon all experiments. Along this line recent events in the British Theatre are quite significant. On the one side the "haemorrhagic" writers smear their scribbling hands with a mixture of ink and blood, filling the desolate stage with dismembered bodies, cannibalistic feasts and necrophiliac performances. On the other side the "humorous" writers seem to have learnt the lesson of the absurdist theatre from the 1950s and the magic of *iteratio* from 16th-century rhetoric: "Quite." "Quite." "Well, well." "Quite, quite", signed Tom Stoppard (*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*), "Well?" "Well, well!" "Well, well, well, well!" A long pause. "Well?", signed Michael Frayn (*Donkey's Years*). Meanwhile Harold Pinter, who has already gone through every trick in the book, has stealthily retrenched in the boudoir comedy of Noël Coward. The ultimate revolutionary exploit must be a return to polite manners, like the fashion of grandmothers' dresses readopted by girls who used to prance about in frayed blue-jeans.

THIS IS EXACTLY what separates us from the world of Noël Coward: polite manners. The model for a gentlemen's behaviour proposed in Renaissance treatises by Castiglione or Della Casa, or incarnated in a later age with the courtiers of Racine, is still conceivable in the modern world if one is willing to make an imaginative leap. The standards of behaviour in a Cowardian character are beyond the boundaries of our imaginative powers. Their very proximity in the time-span alienates them from us, like the skirts or hair-styles of fifteen years ago which appear even more distant in taste than those of the Victorian age. Noël Coward's characters seem exceptional because they are so impeccably *comme-il-faut*, brushed down and polished up, clear in their diction and delicate in their allusions. These strange beings "get up to all sort of tricks", as people used to say in those days, but their manners remain extravagantly appropriate. Their breeding and their etiquette become a curious trade-mark which these poor wretches are bound to exhibit like the conventional ring in the nose which conventional savages were supposed to wear at the time of our grandfathers—and it is not surprising to find a reference to a savage with a beringed facial protuberance in *Private Lives* (1929, Act II).

[1] *The Life of Noël Coward.* By COLE LESLEY. Cape, £7.50.

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Thus in the 3,000 odd pages of Coward's theatre production I have found only one reference—elegantly turned—to the gradation of sounds associated with the stomach and the intestinal tract, that hierarchy of corporeal noises which has been the running sound-track of modern theatre from *Ubu Roi* onwards.

HAY FEVER (1924), one of Coward's most popular plays, can be seen in many ways as a precursor, undemandingly good-natured but still a little cuckoo, of the Theatre of the Absurd. Yet Coward's characters are estranged from us by the portentousness of their good manners. His characters may well be mad as hatters, pretend to be wickedly bohemian, admit to having anarchical ideas, but they never forget their breeding or table manners. The minute their behaviour falls short of the mark, some other character will jump up and say: "Don't be rude!", a comment which dates both the transgressive and the reprimanding voice. Any attempt to subvert or even merely to modify the code of etiquette is blocked before it gets off the ground by this all-purpose "Don't be rude!" You can elope with your best friend's wife, seduce innocent débutantes, argue faintly Wildean paradoxes, provided the knot in your necktie leaves nothing to be desired and your top-pocket handkerchief doesn't stick out too far. It is permitted to speak French in this atmosphere, or at least sprinkle your parlance with a touch of Gallic. But the convention holds that your French must be rotten, in accordance with an age-old British tradition which has still not entirely broken down (see *Conversation Piece*, 1934).

The early Bohème manner of Coward still relies on mansards and gentle florists in a melo-romantic aura which can be dated precisely because it is dateless, located in a temporal Ruritania. One has only to think of that marvellous piece of nonsense, *Bitter Sweet* (1929), where rich girls elope with poor musicians and go off to sing at the roadsides and perform in "sordid" cabarets. Yet later on the playwright's inclination tends to a modernised Bohème for the very rich; rich like Gilda, the heroine of *Design for Living* (1932), who enjoys "an adequate income" and passes casually from one hero to the other in successive years. The two men, Otto a painter and Leo a playwright, are of course highly successful in their calling, and events take place amid cocktail parties, auctions of antiques, and ocean cruises, and involve ruined or rejected careers, invaded bedchambers, bunches of roses, important contracts, first nights at the theatre and trips round the world to forget grief or find inspiration for the future. The naïve rendering

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of an "artistic" ambiance is so false, so distant from our everyday experience while at the same time being persuasively amusing, that it is redeemed by its being *alien*, a world apart in its utter brainlessness.

In fact *Design for Living* is a highly enjoyable play full of secret pleasures for us latter-day admirers of the combinative games of literature. Everything moves fluently, and even the mirror-games of combinatory technique become natural, provided characters are financially assured and their inheritance—still free of death-duties—guarantees their freedom and independence. This applies to most of Coward's heroes: they can always resolve a crisis of the heart or make reparation for a social blunder by taking the right cruise or going off on a long journey. Gilda transfers herself to an "exquisite penthouse" in New York. Elyot in *Private Lives* takes off for South Africa after his divorce from Amanda. Charles Commandines in *Blithe Spirit* abandons his country mansion to the unleashed ghosts of his two wives and leaves for an unspecified destination which is likely to involve an expensive sea-fare ticket.

The economic level of the main characters provides a further advantage: a place on stage and weekly wages for professional actors specialising in the role of servants. Like the heroes of classical drama, in Coward every protagonist has his servant or her maid. But there is something new going on: in 17th-century drama every appearance of a nurse or a tutor unloosed the floodtide of compromising or intimate revelations. The audience knew that it was about to find everything out: skeletons in the cupboard, muttered indiscretions, hints about illegitimate children abandoned by unspeakable relatives, heinous incestuous passions. In Coward's plays, when a servant comes on stage there is a parallel deafening silence. Conversation dries up and polite coughs ring out, with signalling glances of warning. People feel embarrassed as they hold their tongues, while the happy-go-lucky husband drones on despite the urgent hiss of his spouse: "Careful, darling, not in front of the servants." These servants are both present and absent on stage, and it is easy to forget their names, as in *Hay Fever*, or their presence, as in *Fallen Angels* (1925). Apart from just a few exceptions, Coward's servants are merely part of the house or the furniture. When they come to life, the resultant comedy of relations between the drawing-room and the kitchen has a Wodehousian stamp, though the classic Jeeves/Bertie Wooster relationship actually conceals a much richer interplay.

Wodehouse's values are very close to those of the hare-brained young aristocrat, but his intelligence brings him naturally closer to the intellectual in residence, the family's butler. Loyalty and sympathy between representatives of totally different social classes is Wodehouse's favoured subject, and he plays on it in a series of reactionary novels devoted to one of the few resounding heroes of the servant class which European literature has produced after Ruy Blas. As we know, Jeeves is in a position to offer guarded disapproval of his master's tie, while his master even more timidly disapproves of Jeeves' female friends. In this area of subject-matter, Coward still figures as a parvenu who has scarcely learnt how to conduct himself in a drawing-room. He runs too great a risk when he tries to smuggle his jokes from the servants' quarters up to those of the masters.

In *Relative Values*, for example, we have one of his most ridiculous plots, with a blown-up Jeeves figure on whom the intellectual responsibility for the whole house rests. Here the condescending paternalism of Coward grates on the nerves, since the butler can exert his intelligence provided he knows how to keep his place in the household. In Wodehouse the masters wield all the power but are fatally stupid, so that the author's lack of social conscience works in precisely this direction, broadcasting this lack of awareness. Coward on the other hand seems to harbour a lingering fear that his dinner-jacket might be confused with the servant's livery. This social uneasiness is visible in *Nude with Violin* (1956) where the polyglot butler Sebastien replies to constant telephone calls in five different languages. There is the exchange where Clinton says: "Do you ever think of Wagner?" and Sebastien answers: "Constantly." I imagine Jeeves would have said: "Not so much recently, Sir. I haven't seen the Ring Cycle all through for just over two years." Coward is far too cautious both in his social stance and in his cultural display. A comparison with the Wodehouse scene which pre-dates the one in Coward brings out the different style and class of the two writers. I'm referring to that crucial moment in Bertie Wooster's career as an eligible bachelor when Jeeves advises against the reading of Nietzsche. Nietzsche had been unjudiciously suggested by a recent fiancée, the unforgettable Honoria Glossop, daughter of Sir Roderick, the head-shrinker. Maybe Wodehouse hasn't read Nietzsche but he knows what it's all about and he's not afraid of being caught napping. In *Nude with Violin* Sebastien's funny repartee covers a chip on somebody's shoulder. One never knows what is going to happen if one starts meddling with Wagner.

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In other words Coward is a bit of a charlatan and this is a good thing for his plays. His elegance and aristocratic demeanour are a trifle forced. He turns into a worldly writer with all the snobbishness of a man who has even learnt to do his Social Climbing with airs and graces. His plays offered a High Society package for a public that was half-way up the ladder and therefore accepted its values. The main thing is not to be duped by Coward's tricks. We must learn how to criticise as well as appreciate the effervescent wit of his plays. *Fallen Angels*, for example, has recently been revived in this country. It features two well-off couples who behave in symmetrical fashion towards an eccentric outsider. The latter is a Frenchman, rich, elegant, good-looking, and he sings songs that say "*Je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime.*" This character pays court to the two wives, and causes tempestuous dilemmas in the tea-cup morality of this petit-bourgeois world. Here Coward seems to fail in his authorial intent not because the play is stupidly snobbish, but because it is stupidly stupid. Elsewhere the High Society ethos works in all its frivolity, as in *Private Lives* or in *Design for Living*, because of the very ostentatiousness with which frivolity is presented. Coward's best plays are not just frivolous: they become a defence of frivolousness, and herein lies their peculiar strength, as can be seen from the following quotations taken out of the two plays:

> OTTO: The Methodists wouldn't approve of us, and the Catholics wouldn't either; and the Evangelists and the Episcopalians and the Anglicans and the Christian Scientists—I don't suppose even the Polynesian Islanders would think very highly of us, but they wouldn't mind quite so much, being so far away. They could all club together—the whole lot of them—and say with perfect truth, according to their lights, that we were loose-living, irreligious, unmoral degenerates, couldn't they?
> GILDA: (*meekly*) Yes, Otto, I expect so.
> OTTO: But the whole point is, it's none of their business. We're not doing any harm to anyone else. We're not peppering the world with illegitimate children. The only people we could possibly mess up are ourselves, and that's our lookout.
> (*Design for Living*, Act II)

> ELYOT: Don't you believe in anything?
> AMANDA: Oh yes, I believe in being kind to everyone, and giving money to old beggar women, and being as gay as possible.
> (*Private Lives*, Act II)

> ELYOT: (*seriously*) You mustn't be serious, my dear one, it's just what they want.
> AMANDA: Who's they?
> ELYOT: All the futile moralists who try to make life unbearable. Laugh at them. Be flippant. Laugh at everything, all their sacred shibboleths. Flippancy brings out the acid in their damned sweetness and light.
> (*Private Lives*, Act II)

On the one hand we know full well that these characters are monsters of callousness, generously offering *brioches* to people who need *bread*. Yet Otto is in the right: frivolous people harm no one, they don't murder, torture or invent gas-chambers. At worst they may kill the odd passer-by with their careless driving. So up with frivolity, and with a writer who devised an aesthetics of frivolousness. Not only the writer but the reader must become frivolous in order to accept the unwritten laws which regulate his plays. Vera Williams, one of Elyot's ex-mistresses in *Private Lives*, "had the nastiest looking hair-brush I had never seen." Paradoxically this crazy remark provides information to accredited listeners, as none of them could subsequently even dream of seeking Vera William's acquaintance, or of any woman who brandished such a hairbrush. The malice behind social small-talk forms the natural foundation of Coward's texts, and it is bound to be cruel. It requires little heart, an acutely aimed eye and a ready tongue.

George Steiner reproduces a long scene from the first Act of *Private Lives* in his book *After Babel* (1975), and makes the following comment: "The dialogue is a brittle wonder, as perfect within its trivial bounds as comparable scenes in Congreve and Marivaux." I would go even further than this, since neither Marivaux nor Congreve could have written an Act which is so "perfect"

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in its frivolousness as the whole first Act of *Private Lives*. Steiner dwells on the sentimental moments in Noël Coward, whereas I would like to concentrate on the nasty wit of the dialogue:

> AMANDA: Have you known her long?
> ELYOT: About four months, we met in a house party in Norfolk.
> AMANDA: Very flat, Norfolk.
> ELYOT: How old is dear Victor?
> AMANDA: Thirty-four, or five; and Sibyl?
> ELYOT: I blush to tell you, only twenty-three.
> AMANDA: You've gone a mucker alright.
> ELYOT: I shall reserve my opinion of your choice until I've met dear Victor.
> AMANDA: I wish you wouldn't go on calling him "Dear Victor." It's extremely irritating.
> ELYOT: That's how I see him. Dumpy, and fair, and very considerate, with glasses. Dear Victor.
> AMANDA: As I said before I would rather not discuss him. At least I have good taste enough to refrain from making cheap gibes at Sibyl.
> ELYOT: You said Norfolk was flat.
> AMANDA: That was no reflection on her, unless she made it flatter.
>
> (*Private Lives*, Act I)

I see this as a consummate point of arrival for theatrical dialogue: it exploits the resources of word and action, deploying intonation and repetition, cadence, implication and allusiveness —in other words the whole semantic potentiality of a conversation. Words here not only mean what the dictionary prescribes, but they also carry an added meaning dictated and imposed by the author. We do not have two developed characters as such—the play could not accommodate them—but we have two distinct voices. The ramification of their trite, everyday words, such as "Dear Victor", leads to a host of subsidiary allusions. The conceptual shift between geological plane and anatomical endowment suggested by the flatness of Norfolk is carried out with a delicacy as striking as the malice that prompts it. Possibly the context is trivial but the treatment is worthy of great theatre. That *iteratio* "Dear Victor" in three contexts with three separate meanings is a rhetorical manoeuvre as refined as Mark Antony's antiphrasis in his speech to the Roman people in *Julius Caesar*.

COWARD'S PLAYS also reserve remarkable structural surprises. Usually we have a game of love and chance that seems to follow the abstract rules of a ballet, or a society parlour game. These games are in fact common in Coward's plays (see *Bitter Sweet*, Act I; *Hay Fever*, Act II), and can be assessed as a minor symbol of the plot itself. The characters follow patterns of non-psychological behaviour with fixed rules which oblige them to court or not to court a given lady, as the case may be; to betray or not to betray a husband; to pretend a great passion or total indifference. All of them inject the same worldly energy into their stereotyped adventures as they would into a parlour game. Thus the game that most closely matches the tone of the plays is Musical Chairs, for we have different pairs of performers, lovers, fiancés, married people, joining and parting according to the rhythmic pattern of music and dialogue.

The whole manner concerns the basic objective of producing a "well made" play, proportionately more predictable and less stimulating than the firebrand scenes which have revolutionised modern theatre. But symmetrical satisfaction is an important aesthetic consideration in Coward's plays, and is frequently derived from the mirror-image patterns produced by love-intrigue after the imitable model of *Così fan tutte*. The intrigues can be repeated, or reversed, or parallel and matching: thus in the first Act of *Design for Living* Gilda conceals from her present lover Otto the fact that Leo, her occasional lover, is somewhere in the bedroom; in Act II Gilda conceals from her new lover, Leo, the fact that Otto is now in her bedroom; in Act III both Otto and Leo are discovered in pyjamas inside the house of Gilda's new husband. In *Hay Fever* there is an eccentric family composed of a father who writes, a mother who acts, a son who paints and a daughter who does nothing. They invite four guests for the week-end with amorous intentions, but the four possible couples are uncoupled in Act I, form new couplings in Act II and then peter out in Act III. But there will be no illegitimate children: we recall that frivolous characters must only harm themselves, or at the very worst cause their friends to pass a "horrid" weekend. In *Present Laughter* (1939) we see a series of early morning embarrassments when different and unexpected women emerge from the guest's room wearing the host's pyjamas and demanding rapid service of a hearty breakfast. *Private Lives*, probably Coward's masterpiece, presents the famous situation of a divorced couple on their respective second honeymoons; they occupy two adjoining balconies of the same hotel in Deauville —notice how Coward's geography is as predictable as the tactics to be followed in the double-coincidence plot. These characters become pretexts for a combinative product, playing cards designed for a patience game which follows the same patterns in a different outward form.

Coward was only partly aware of this. Sometimes we may even suspect that the author takes his playing cards for something rather different, as though even the Queen of Clubs could have a "psychology" of her own—and the banished word, "psychology", turns up on the lips of Garry Essendine, Coward's *alter ego* in *Present*

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Laughter, in a clamorously incongruous reference to Chekhov's plays. In point of fact the string of characters does not offer a psychological cast but a behavioural series to the observer. Coward is a pure behaviourist who can manipulate all the expected responses. He knows just how to wind up his mechanical toys so as to produce a rigid but amusing chain of reactions. Suppose, for example, the first wife is instinctively jealous of the second, and the first husband of the next one (the opposite way round is unthinkable in Coward's behaviouristic universe). The result of these jealousies is the "Dear Victor" dialogue and the remarks on the flatness of Norfolk. These plays exist because the characters have no real existence. If they really did exist, their roundness would slow down the rhythm of pure action. This rhythm is often "frantic" like the life-style in the Essendine household (*Present Laughter*), which is torn apart by collaborators, colleagues, ex-mistresses, wives in retirement or moth-balls, together with aspiring playwrights, secretaries and rivals. The same goes for *Blithe Spirit*, which is subtitled an "improbable farce in Three Acts", but is really the most plausible of Coward's plays despite its supernatural elements. The character of the psychic medium, Madame Arcati, and both the wives (whether in flesh and blood or in ectoplasm) are felicitous in their pure behavioural credibility—provided we admit that human beings have a range of reactions that can be compared to the chimpanzee.

AS WELL AS BEING a pure behaviourist, Coward is also a perfect hedonist, that is to say, someone who is unaware of, or evasive about, passion. "Passion", of course, does not mean the search for pleasure, but the search for real extremes of pleasure, and hence of pain. "It's so uncomfortable—passion", says Julia in *Fallen Angels*, and Fred, her husband, comments: "I think it's awfully silly of people to lead unhappy lives." Julia's programme is the following: "Complete happiness and tranquillity devoid of violent emotions of any kind with the possible exception of golf." So it will be sufficient to avoid excesses and search systematically for moderate pleasures —bank balance permitting—and all your troubles will fade away. Admittedly there is love, which complicates things, but this too can be made pleasant, light and easy like a dance movement. The moment of greatest intensity in love is suggested by the pirouette of a suitor on the sofa, beyond the familiar obstacle, into the arms of his beloved. Otto: "To hell with the sofa!" (*he vaults over it and takes her in his arms*), *Design for Living*, Act II. The sofa is the pivot around which circulates the whole story for the duration of Act II of *Private Lives*. Love *à la Coward* involves a certain commitment and a measure of sexual gratification. But there is a strong *caveat*: sex is a highly over-rated form of enjoyment and so are honeymoons (*Private Lives*, Act I). It is worth allowing the playwright Garry Essendine in *Present Laughter* to express his point of view in full:

> GARRY: Joanna's different again. She devotes a great deal of time to sex but not for any of the intrinsic pleasure of it, merely as a means to an end. She's a collector. A go-getter, an attractive, unscrupulous pirate. I personally am none of these things. To me the whole business is vastly overrated. I enjoy it for what it's worth and fully intend to go on doing so for as long as anybody's interested and when the time comes that they're not I shall be perfectly content to settle down with an apple and a good book!
>
> (*Present Laughter*, Act III)

In short, sex is something that is "beastly and rotten", and when it takes place it ruins everything (Julia in *Fallen Angels*). Passion is something different since it has a just place in the dictionary and so is surely right. Yet the vocabulary of passion is clearly seen to be mendacious. Here the case of *Blithe Spirit* is the most interesting. When Madame Arcati, the medium, argues that it was Charles's passion which called back the spirits of his first and second wives, one after the other, the husband is suddenly faced by a practical verification of his amorous vocabulary. In other words, not only did he say that he loved his first and second wives, but he actually did love them passionately. This idea absolutely bowls Charles over:

> MADAME ARCATI: Love is a strong psychic force, Mr Commandines—it can work untold miracles—a true love can encompass the world.
> CHARLES: I am sure it can, but I must confess to you frankly that although my affection for both Elvira and Ruth is of the warmest, I cannot truthfully feel that it would come under the heading that you describe.
>
> (*Blithe Spirit*, Act III)

The semantic ambiguity of that superlative "warmest" betrays the hypocrisy inherent in the language. And as for hypocritical behaviour, we must consider the obsessive use of pyjamas in Coward. The sign of the erotic is far from the seven veils of Salomé, or the bikini of Raquel Welch, or the G-string of the striptease artiste, but rather a pair of silk pyjamas with monogrammed initials. Perhaps these people conducted their whole love-lives in pyjamas, like the Japanese with their kimonos in 18th-century erotic prints. And then, when everything is done, off they go to their separate rooms: the seducer to his bedroom, the seduced into the guest-room (*Present Laughter*, Acts I and II). Coward is a theoretician of passion in the house-coat, of love in pyjamas, of sensual transports in a *liseuse*, with shawl optional.

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PERHAPS COWARD is aware that behind him there is a shadow that belongs to the forbidding figure of Oscar Wilde. Indeed, the cucumber sandwich which the ghost of Elvira would like to eat in *Blithe Spirit* is practically an act of homage to the author of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. However, we must draw a distinction: Coward's cynical jokes are totally inconsequential and die in their own time. Wilde's humour, on the contrary, is unforeseeable, and once he starts off on a string of his paradoxes nobody has a clue where he is going to end up. Coward seems to have understood everything about Wilde except his "greatness", but one of Coward's merits is that he could assess his own relative "smallness." There is a pleasant vein of ironic self-depreciation in Coward that makes his frivolity all the more acceptable. His semi-autobiographical characters, especially the hero of *Present Laughter*, where Coward seems to be observing himself in the mirror—not without some measure of gratification—are exaggeratedly likable, excessively witty, irresistibly attractive; but they are also nicely ludicrous. In *Design for Living* the playwright Leo is described as one who "flips along with easy swift dialogue, but doesn't go deep enough" (Act II). His plays are not just "thin" but also "emaciated." The aspiring writer says to Garry Essendine in *Present Laughter:* "All you do with your talent is to wear dressing-gowns and make witty remarks", and this observation is much too pertinent in the context of Coward himself to be totally accidental. This particular arrow is sighted very close to the real target. Possibly Coward, aware of being a prodigiously gifted author, wanted to be different, to be capable of writing pungently, whereas instead his writing merely titillates. It fits the definition of Alexander Pope: "'Tis a sort of writing like tickling."

Joining Loose Threads

A Japanese Romance—By D. J. ENRIGHT

A NEW TRANSLATION, in 1100 closely set though handsome pages, of the early 11th-century classic Japanese romance. . . . A phenomenon which, in view of its originality and unprecedented scope, can only be likened to a combination of *Antony and Cleopatra*, *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale* (with a dash of *Love's Labour's Lost*) appearing in full flower against a backcloth of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* and *Gorboduc*. . . . To review it is analogous to reviewing the Revised Version, and inevitably comparing it with King James's—except that the general tendency of the Bible is rather better known than *The Tale of Genji*.[1] What can one say, and where can one start to say it?

Perhaps, on the grounds that he may be addressing the common reader, the reviewer may venture upon a few common and possibly vulgar observations. The hero of Lady Murasaki's *Tale*, or the larger part of it since Genji dies two-thirds of the way through, is that not uncommon fictional character, the Great Lover—potent, gifted, irresistible, and nice with it. Genji *is* too good to be true, until sadness sets in. But that *The Tale of Genji* is not a "romance" in the pejorative modern sense, that it is not simply a Heian fantasy of an earlier and better Heian world, an altogether more sophisticated version of England's Restoration comedy at its most sophisticated, is indicated by reference to other 10th- and 11th-century Japanese women writers. And, most forcibly, Murasaki Shikibu's contemporary, Sei Shōnagon, whose *Pillow Book*[2] reveals her as an astringent, forthright and unromanticising witness while testifying to the general authenticity of Murasaki's more dream-like impressions.

The effect of reality in *Genji*, as opposed to fantasy, is assisted by the author's occasional cool intervention; for example, at the end of Chapter 4:

> "I had hoped, out of deference to him, to conceal these difficult matters; but I have been accused of romancing, of pretending that because he was the son of an emperor he had no faults. Now, perhaps, I shall be accused of having revealed too much."

And rather more comically: "Though no one has asked me to do so, I should like to describe the surprise of the assistant viceroy's wife at this turn of events", she writes in concluding Chapter 15, "but it would be a bother and my head is aching." In Chapter 25 there occurs a passage

[1] *The Tale of Genji*. By MURASAKI SHIKIBU. Translated with an Introduction by EDWARD G. SEIDENSTICKER. Two volumes. Secker & Warburg, £15.

[2] See the late Ivan Morris's exhaustively annotated translation, 1967; also, in a general connection, his book *The World of the Shining Prince*, 1964.

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reminiscent of Jane Austen's spirited defence of novels in *Northanger Abbey* ("performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them"). After teasing Tamakazura about her fondness for romances—"Women seem to have been born to be cheerfully deceived"—Genji changes tack:

> "I have been rude and unfair to your romances, haven't I? They have set down and preserved happenings from the age of the gods to our own. *The Chronicles of Japan* and the rest are a mere fragment of the whole truth. It is your romances that fill in the details . . . to dismiss them as lies is itself to depart from the truth. Even in the writ which the Buddha drew from his noble heart are parables, devices for pointing obliquely at the truth."

No more than Jane Austen did Murasaki approve of running down the very activity she was herself engaged in.

Heian Japan was "a man's world"—though apparently less overwhelmingly so than Japan and the world at large have been at much later dates—and it was left to the women to write about it. The men were busy with more important things, such as governing the country (or in the case of the *Genji* males serving at court), being accomplished and noble, writing "seriously" or stodgily in Chinese—and seducing women. Women, it has been suggested, were less confined by convention than men, and had more time and licence for scribbling in their native tongue. Murasaki Shikibu was the most remarkable of a group of remarkable females: if she has no male counterpart in her own country, she has no female counterpart in any country—and doubtfully any male counterpart, come to that.

None the less, her admiration for her hero is likely to stick in the feminist gullet. One would say that she doted on Genji, except that such crude, barbarous emotions as that verb implies are not to be found in her. An attempt on the reader's part to enumerate Genji's love affairs would be incongruously loutish, and in any case frustrated by uncertainty in many cases as to whether the protagonists exchanged poems or something more besides. Lack of privacy often seems to rule out the latter in these overcrowded compounds: people who live in paper houses should stay in their own rooms, specially when their silk robes rustle so loudly. (Though against this perhaps one should set the Japanese ability to remain blind or deaf to those things which it would be incorrect or inconvenient to see or hear.) Murasaki shows not the faintest interest in the physical act of sex. Desire or curiosity on the man's side is indicated, willingness (sometimes but not always) on the woman's side, a relatively secret meeting has to be contrived, and there we leave them: "let us not look in too closely upon their dalliance"—taking up the story again with the next morning's exchange of poem-notes or bed-and-butter letters. But certainly Genji's affairs were many. "He went on thinking about whatever woman he encountered. A perverse concomitant was that the women he went on thinking about went on thinking about him."

GENJI IS NOT MERELY good at everything that counts, he is best at everything that counts: poetry, painting, music, perfumes, dress, bearing, conversation, attentiveness. . . . And of course he is the best-looking of all the good-looking nobles who throng the scene. The words of the imperial consort's attendant refer to more than the perfume he happens to be wearing: "He brings everything all together in himself, like a willow that is all of a sudden blooming like a cherry. It sets a person to shivering." For the author, Genji is "the shining one of whom the whole world talks", and at times it strikes the reader that the whole of this world had precious little else to talk about, and precious little to do except to talk. Admittedly Murasaki does chide the prince from time to time, if fondly. "It continues to be his great defect that his attention wanders." We note with some amusement that when Genji has become convinced that a current liaison is illicit, his attention at once wanders

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to a new liaison in which he anticipates joy. Thus, when the fruits of his affair with his stepmother begin to show under her robes, his thoughts turn to a ten-year-old girl, though he knows he is taking risks: "People would say that his appetites were altogether too varied." But, Murasaki stresses, the great thing about Genji is that he never forgets his women, he does the right thing by them as far as is in his power. "The result is that he has a large collection", someone remarks.

Not that the prince is a carefree Lothario: oh no, he is Japanese after all, and a sense of the transitoriness of things is never far away, a tear is never far from his eye. With a sensibility like his a little suffering can go a long way: you hardly need anything as uncouth as a reason. However, Genji does have his troubles. One unsuitable intrigue leads to his banishment for a period; the effect on his retinue reminds us of the defeated Antony's ability to make his followers weep. Another intrigue scars his soul permanently. Early on he fell in love with the second wife of his father the emperor and had a child by her generally believed to be the emperor's: his supposed brother is actually his son. Later a form of retribution arrives when Kashiwagi, son of Genji's closest friend, gets Genji's wife, the Third Princess (Kashiwagi's sister-in-law incidentally), pregnant. When this comes to light there is no duel, no hard words, no overt recognition of the fact. Kashiwagi has been guilty of a lapse in taste, of bad manners, above all (the cynic would say) the bad manners to be found out. At least he has the good manners to die soon after, just as Enobarbus dies immediately after deserting his master Antony, and the Third Princess becomes a nun. This sequel, it might be felt, is necessary in Murasaki's eyes because it is the shining Genji who is the offended party: Genji himself didn't die when he got his father's wife with child.

What matters is manners rather than morals, it would seem, the aesthetically pleasing way of doing a thing rather than the thing itself. And shame lies less in being naughty than in being found out. Telling lies or inventing plausible stories in the cause of avoiding trouble and loss of face either for the offender or the offended is quite in order, if not *de rigueur*. For much worrying goes on here about "what people will say": to be laughed at is a fate worse than death. But this delicacy of feeling is general, not merely self-directed. Having learnt that his brother Genji is really his father, the new emperor is fearful of embarrassing Genji by hinting at his new knowledge. When suffering from malaria, Genji consults a sage—in secret, because (he explains) "such is his reputation that I hated to risk marring it by failing to recover."

THE EXQUISITENESS OF MANNERS, occasionally broken by outbursts of animal spirits and a rather brutal disposing of people's lives, intimates a social precariousness. Yet—and despite the somewhat mechanical readiness to shed *lacrimae rerum*—what most saves *Genji* from brittleness is the pervasive sense of evanescence, of the "fleeting, insubstantial world." If a child is intelligent and beautiful, everybody sighs: it cannot be expected to live long. That Genji himself lasted just into his fifties is a mark of the author's unwillingness to let go of him; even so his ladies muse, "it is true . . . the cherry blossoms of spring are loved because they bloom so briefly." Nor is the sense of past or future particularly cheering. A "stupid, senseless affair" is accounted for by "a bond in some other life", and unsuccessful undertakings or actions injurious to others are put down to "the disabilities we bring from other lives." Karma, it may be thought, is a useful face-saving device—or, more generously, a tactful and in some cases stoical admission of human weakness. There is something of *Rasselas* here: "Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed." Genji's philandering and the behaviour of other characters, male and female, in the story can be derived without the exercise of undue charity from the hunger for human contact in a highly formalised society, for love and companionship. This hunger is most movingly expressed in a poem alluded to in Chapter 47, "Trefoil Knots", and given by Edward G. Seidensticker in a footnote:

A loose thread here to join to a loose thread there.
If it cannot be so with us, what use is life?[3]

[3] The next and only remaining step is withdrawal from the world into prayer and meditation—it having hitherto been considered (as Donald Keene puts it) "not in very good taste to show unusual piety." Cf. Restoration comedy: "What an odious thing it is to be thought to love a wife in good company."

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TRULY SPEAKING, it is futile to compare Seidensticker's *Tale of Genji* with Arthur Waley's translation (1925–33) since the two versions are basically different in kind. But it is also irresistible. We shall sometimes find it hard to believe they are concerned with the same original, even if we allow for the work done on the original text since Waley's time. For one thing, Seidensticker's version is complete, whereas Waley abridged, omitted a whole chapter and frequently elaborated. The effect of his elaboration is often to help the Western reader by weaving an element of explanation into the narrative. When one comes across a textual crux in Seidensticker, and hence an annotation, the chances are that Waley has quietly skipped the vexed passage—with no apparent loss, it must be said, to the general reader. Seidensticker is scholarly and conscientious and (the lay reader feels confident) accurate. He is much brisker (which in general one welcomes), as may be deduced from the fact that despite Waley's bold abridgements this new translation is actually shorter. This briskness, this economy in words, Seidensticker says, are characteristic of the original. None the less he pays a very considerable tribute when he tells us that the power of Waley's version "has continued to be so great that the process of preparing a new translation has felt like sacrilege."

In short, Waley has the reader in mind whereas Seidensticker has Murasaki in mind. Where Seidensticker gives the somewhat rebarbative "Prajñāpāramitā Sutra", Waley softens with "Spring Devotions", indicating the Buddhist nature of the ceremony in passing. Waley has "Lady Murasaki" (the character, not the author) where Seidensticker more allusively and elusively gives "the lady in the east wing." The *dramatis personae* are many indeed, and Waley's habit of identifying them by name makes for easier reading than Seidensticker's (no doubt literal) "he" or "she." In Chapter 21 Sachuben, a master of poetry reading, is annotated by Seidensticker as "otherwise unidentified." Waley refers to him not by name but by office, "the Undersecretary to the Council", which seems a neat if possibly unauthorised solution. (A page later, however, the same character appears as "the Chief Secretary of Council.")

When a father is reflecting on his daughter's future, Seidensticker translates thus:

> If he is still interested when he is a little older, she would be better off in his hands than at court. I know his Lordship well. Once a woman has attracted his attention he never forgets her.

Waley renders the same passage in this way:

> There's this comfort about it, that if Prince Yugiri is anything like his father he will continue to show an interest in her when he grows up. You know I have always told you that once Prince Genji takes a fancy to people, he never forgets them, come what may.

Waley has spelt out the pronouns and distinguished between the son and the father, thus helping the reader to keep his bearings. Seidensticker has translated elliptically, and probably faithfully, in fewer words. Immediately afterwards he has the advantage in ready comprehensibility with "I know that people are calling me the unpromoted marvel, and I don't enjoy going to court" over Waley's "Why should I go to Court if I do not choose to? As a matter of fact, it is very unpleasant to be only in the Sixth Rank. People notice it and make remarks."

Very occasionally Seidensticker's expressions strike one as obtrusively slangy where Waley's language is bland and timeless, though perhaps some readers may welcome such little modern jolts. "When they are side by side, my husband seems rather short on good looks" comes rather jarringly from the second daughter of the Eighth Prince: Waley has "When they are together I sometimes think that Niou comes out of it none too well." And surely Seidensticker's sentence "He sought to dismiss it as an ordinary marital spat" is guilty of mixing two very contrary modes. When young men are discussing the wiles of women and one remarks that "The fact is not up to the advance notices", the anachronism shocks more than it enlivens; at the same place Waley has "But when we take steps to test their statements we are invariably disappointed", which is longwinded and a mite pompous for the gilded youth who is speaking.

Much of the time, in making these spot-checks, one is conscious less of inferiority or superiority than of difference, and probably more to the point would be to suggest that the average reader (who is not likely to be all that dumb) might welcome a résumé affording him a ready reminder of the story's tangled relationships and its more important events. This is hardly a book to be knocked off in a couple of evenings'

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reading and the list of "Principal Characters", though helpful, doesn't go far enough.

JUST AS PROUST is the only Western writer one can think of as bearing any kinship to Murasaki Shikibu, so the comparison of Waley's *Genji* with Scott Moncrieff's *Remembrance of Things Past* is barely avoidable—though it would need a person of surpassing scholarship and literary sensibility to work out its implications. At all events, the reader coming fresh to *Genji* will meet with very few obstacles in Seidensticker's version that Seidensticker himself, a thoroughly experienced translator from the Japanese, can be held responsible for. The reader acquainted with Waley's version will do well to banish it to the back of his mind while engaged on Seidensticker. My guess is that the two translations are going to coexist peacefully, neither ousting the other.

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Lord Bethell's book, *The Last Secret*, narrating for the first time the full story of the Anglo-American forcible repatriation of Russian prisoners in 1945, was published in 1974 by André Deutsch (London) and Basic Books (New York). In an article for ENCOUNTER ("After the Last Secret", November 1973) he responded to various points raised during the controversy which the book caused. We are indebted to Vladimir Maximov, Editor of *Kontinent* in Paris, for permission to publish his present article. *(© Kontinent 1977)*.

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EAST & WEST

Zinoviev's Masterpiece

News from Nowhere in Ibansk

Moscow, Feb. 21

Mr Alexander Zinoviev, a former professor of logic who was dismissed from the Moscow Institute of Philosophy after publishing a novel in the West, has been stripped of all his academic degrees and titles.

THE TIMES (*London*)

THE SOVIET PHILOSOPHER Alexander Zinoviev is still known in the West only to a few specialists. But this should change as soon as his book *Yawning Heights*, published in the Russian original by *L'Age d'Homme* of Lausanne, becomes available to Western readers in translation—if that Herculean task can be satisfactorily performed. Publication of the book caused Zinoviev to be dismissed from the Philosophical Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences last autumn. He was restored to his post after protests by his West European colleagues, but has now been expelled for the second time.

Yawning Heights (561 pages of tiny print, practically undivided into paragraphs, best read with a magnifying glass) is both the wittiest and most abstruse protest yet directed by the Russian spirit at the *Condition humaine* in the world and in its own country. "Be careful", one of the characters says to a foreign journalist who is visiting the imaginary land of Ibansk and always turns up whenever some intelligent piece of stupidity is about to be proclaimed. "Be careful, you are on a visit to the society of the future."

Thus the action takes place, not in the Soviet Union, but in the fictitious country of Ibansk, the home of "Socism", where that doctrine has been worked out to its logical conclusion, and the time is the "Period of Bewilderment" that followed the death of the moustached "Master of the House" who spoke with a marked Georgian accent. He has been succeeded by the blustering Khryak, whose name means "hog"; that his creation was inspired by the figure of Khrushchev seems more than likely. The preceding period was the Age of Bankruptcy, when part of the population was confined in camps while another part guarded them and the remainder saw to it that nothing ever quite changed. But that period survives only as a nightmarish memory. As for the future, the picture of the golden age that lies ahead must be regarded as a parable and an awful warning. Whenever Zinoviev is dealing with the period of triumphant "Socism", historical parameters (to say nothing of topical references) disappear and political fantasy takes over. All references to living persons, contemporary events, or familiar historical personalities suddenly cease. The idea of Ibansk as the world headquarters of triumphant Socism is, as is stated in one passage in the book, "based on unrealisable premises", so the only observable dimension left is the hopeless age of bankruptcy. For all the grotesqueries in its description, the reader recognises it as his own.

> Where is Ibansk? . . . How does one get to Ibansk? To get to it you have to make a formal application, submit a *curriculum vitae*, a variety of officially authenticated identification papers and certificates, and fill in a questionnaire. All close, distant and deceased relatives must be mentioned in the latter, and authenticated documents must be produced showing that they too never considered taking a Trip Abroad, let alone failed to observe the duty of Silence. . . . When you have satisfactorily done all this you have no further need to ask where Ibansk is, because you are there already. . . .
>
> It is easy to see what Ibanism is. Our society is the most perfect, the most humane, the freest, the . . . est, the . . . est, the . . . est . . .!
>
> If you come across anything bad anywhere in the world, remember that in Ibansk it doesn't exist, because in principle nothing bad can exist in Ibansk. If you hit on a bright idea anywhere, remember that in Ibansk there are still brighter ideas on the subject. If you discover a mistake anywhere, remember that that mistake does not occur in Ibansk, because Ibanism *a priori* excludes the possibility of any kind of mistake.

THE BOOK, apart from chronological round-ups, consists of dialogue and discussion, written down without paragraphs or quotation marks. In allusion to Andrey Sinyavsky's book, one might speak of "Voices in the Chorus",[1] for all have their turn: representatives of the ruling caste, dissidents, and the trimmers in between. Thus on the one side there is the Establishment—academicians, scientists, artists, writers, journalists, editors, governmental and party bureaucrats; on the other are all shades of Opposition opinion, individuals who are able to think but have no power to act. As social pariahs they have names given to them by the bureaucracy, *i.e.* the Talker, the Slanderer, the Pharisee, the Schizophrenic, *etc.* The Talker, himself a member of the Opposition, sums them up as follows:

> In the first place there are the liberals, who want power and imagine they would organise it better

[1] See Max Hayward on Sinyavsky's *A Voice from the Chorus*, ENCOUNTER, August 1976.

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than their conservative opponents. . . . Secondly, there are the profiteers of all sorts, who are dissatisfied because they are doing badly. . . . Thirdly, there are the people who are angry with the System because under it they cannot attain what they think themselves capable of. . . . Fourthly, there is the artistic intelligentsia . . . that is unable to develop creatively. . . . Fifthly, there are those who know life in the West and suffer at not being able to live in the same way at home. Sixthly, there are those who store up in themselves the excrescences of the System, particularly the terror, raised to the *n*th power, as it were. The Seeker after Truth is one of these. Seventhly, there are those who feel they have been passed over. And, finally, there are those who think about the nature of life quite independently of the course taken by their own life under the System, an attitude, incidentally, that causes them to be resented by everybody. . . . All these groups, with the exception of the sixth and the eighth, feel themselves to be Martyrs and behave accordingly.

Sometimes even a far-away Western reader can guess whom he is reading about, and this is confirmed by the publisher's blurb. The Seeker after Truth is surely Solzhenitsyn; the Pharisee is Sinyavsky; and the Dauber is apparently the sculptor Neizvestny who now lives in the West (in Zinoviev's account he is a painter and sculptor, a kind of infant prodigy in whose studio Establishment and Opposition meet). Also Yevgeni Yevtushenko appears under the not very flattering name of Baby's-Bib, but that is Zinoviev's only personal attack of this kind. The pillars of society, on the other hand, have names that sound like orders and decorations, such as the Thinker, the Sociologist, the Teacher, the Theorist, the Scientist, the Secretary, the Pretender, the Collaborator. These are—of course—in inverse proportion to the importance of the individual concerned.

The reader can really manage without such sarcasm, for the language itself reveals whom he is getting at. Two idioms, two ways of expressing oneself, are in conflict: the official, cliché-ridden language of "Above" and the uncensored language of "Below." Also there is an abundance of verses, poems and ribald rhymes of all catagories and in all styles, from Baby's-Bib "lawful" poetry, which Zinoviev mercilessly parodies, to the "illegal", running from the so-called "evil poems" (they deal disrespectfully with Ibanism) to the romantic songs of the Singer (imitations of Alexander Galich). They mock and ridicule, joke and frolic, weep and whine in every key; they are politically aggressive, trite, desperate, obscene; no boundaries are set to the imagination. The same applies to Zinoviev's prose, a mixture of theatrical dialogue, science-fiction, pamphleteering reportage, scientific treatise, parable, parodied editorials, propaganda slogans, and high-spirited absurdity.

YAWNING HEIGHTS is a kind of critique of pure totalitarianism, for even what the bureaucracy has to say in defence of (or even only in rational explanation of) Ibanism ends in a savage satire.

Tell me frankly, said the Neurasthenic: Is the Sociologist one of your collaborators too?

Yes, said the Collaborator.

And the Thinker? the Neurasthenic asked.

He's our man too, the Collaborator replied.

How dreadful! said the Neurasthenic. Why dreadful? said the Collaborator. It's only normal. . . .

I, for instance, am not one of your people, said the Neurasthenic.

You are a potential collaborator, said the Collaborator. We have not lost sight of you.

In principle I have nothing against it, said the Neurasthenic, provided the pay is good, of course. I could give lectures that would be no worse than the Sociologist's. Frankly, the Sociologist is an idler, a dilettante and a liar.

Yes, said the Collaborator, he has been turning out pretty bad work recently. His reputation is declining. He ought to be replaced by someone else, but we can return to that later.

And the Seeker after Truth? the Neurasthenic asked.

He was a potential collaborator too, the Collaborator said. If Hog had behaved more cleverly at the time, the Seeker after Truth would now be chairman of the Writers' Union.

But Hog advanced him, the Neurasthenic said in surprise.

Yes, said the Collaborator, but then he got frightened and ordered him to be put under pressure.

What a shame, said the Neurasthenic.

You can't be a member of our society, said the Collaborator, without being subjected to its influence. As soon as a person is born he becomes our collaborator. That is the first thing that happens to him. Only then does he learn to walk, to talk, to write. . . . Our collaborators are divided into two groups: the actual and the potential. The actual collaborators are in turn divided into three groups. They could be described as the regular, the sporadic, and the bashful. The regulars work in our various services and, more or less satisfactorily, carry out the tasks we set them. The sporadic carry out these tasks according to occasion and circumstances. The bashful either do not notice they are in our service or act as if they do not notice it. They are the great majority. We can hardly hold our own against them. The rest of the population are potential collaborators and so remain for the whole of their lives, either because they are incapable of carrying out their allotted task or because the time is not yet ripe for their services.

And the Opposition? the Neurasthenic asked.

The Opposition was made by us, said the Collaborator. Examine one of our most rabid dissidents under the microscope and you'll discover in him a failed Sociologist, or Thinker. All Pretenders. The dissidents aren't worth considering.

Who is worth considering, then? the Neurasthenic asked.

The independents, the Collaborator replied. They are foreign bodies in our society. There are very few of them. But they are dangerous, because they are sovereign. A single independent can do more harm than an opposition party with millions of members. I personally would permit parties.

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With us they would in any case degenerate into low farce, out of inner necessity and without any outside intervention. I'm against any kind of coercion. All objectives can be attained without coercion, and far more successfully. One must only have patience and know how to wait. When one uses force on people they think themselves capable of a great deal. Give them freedom, and they quickly find out they're quite incapable of anything. The ability to do something is a mutation.

That sounds very scientific, the Neurasthenic said. Where did you get these ideas from?

I've read the Schizophrenic and the Slanderer in my time, said the Collaborator.

THE VARIOUS CHARACTERS know one another and meet socially. Dissidents, members of the Establishment and ideological cross-benchers meet in the Dauber's studio as on neutral territory. Endless discussions and arguments arise in which practically all points of view are expressed, if only to express the general hopelessness, as, for instance, in the "Argument about Ideology." The Careerist makes fun of the proposal made by the Seeker after Truth that the official ideology should be finally abandoned on the ground that no one believes in it any longer in any case. The Talker takes issue with him:

> The origin and development of an ideology is outside human control. It is an impenetrable secret, and will remain one, though it all takes place before our eyes. So long as men are in a position to influence ideology, they do not know what ideology is. And if they begin to guess, it's too late. . . . The attitude to the official ideology is the most important element in the system of selection—on the road to power. . . . An individual who even toys with the idea of reforming the ideology, let alone abolishing it, can never attain power. . . . And if he were ever to express such a notion after attaining power, he would so weaken his position that he would have to abandon it.
>
> That's true, said the Careerist. That's true, said the Scholar. That's true, said the Dauber. That's true, said the Neurasthenic.

THE FINALE is in accordance with this gloomy consensus. One day a law is promulgated in Ibansk permitting citizens to apply to commit suicide on reaching pensionable age. Though there is no coercion in the matter, everyone without exception (including the Talker, the least of the dissidents) applies to the crematorium. But the Talker, having not yet reached the pensionable age, has to count on the possibility of not being admitted to the waiting list.

> But the Talker was in luck. For the first time in his life. And for the last, he said to himself. Everything seems to be in order in your case, the Funeral Official said, apart from a few minor formal imperfections in the *curriculum vitae*. Well, we won't take any notice of them. We're no bureaucrats, so why all this red tape? But there's just one thing that puzzles me. Who gave you the recommendation to the crematorium though you haven't reached the pension age? In such cases there must be some special reason. An incurable illness, perhaps?
>
> Yes, said the Talker, I suffer from incurable boredom.
>
> Oh, I see, said the Official. That's different.

Over the entrance to the crematorium is an inscription saying: "BEAR IN MIND THAT NO ONE IS COERCING YOU!" Another inscription over the exit, says: "*On leaving don't forget to take the urn with your ashes with you!*"

The last sentences in the book are: ". . . And he was no more. And everything was over."

THAT IS THE END of Zinoviev's description of Socism. But somewhere, in the absolute dimension of fantasy, the universal legend of boring Socism survives. Ibansk has conquered the world. The remains of the cities that survive the War are given catalogue numbers. Paris is registered as 031/5634. All of the Opposition has been wiped out, and all attempts to revive it artificially have been in vain. So a kind of reservation called the "Disunited Bourgeois Democratic Republic" is established in a pathless swamp. Slanderous attacks on Ibansk are broadcast from it; and the people of Ibansk listen to them with nostalgic pleasure, delighted at having something to provide them with some slight nervous titillation.

True, there is also a kind of epilogue—the War between Lower and Upper Ibansk—but the incidents in that affray are too abstruse, and above all too much derived from the anal sphere, not to make disappointing reading. All the same, the idea is not unappealing. During the world-wide hostilities, part of the population of Ibansk takes refuge underground where they establish their own régime. The people "above" end by forgetting them completely, and attribute to volcanic activity all the noises that reach them from below. But one day the naked, stinking Lower Ibanese emerge from the underworld and announce their claim to world dominion, for they too have developed their own perfect Lower Socism. A compromise détente is grudgingly agreed to. . . .

Subsequent events are left to the imagination of the reader who, exhausted and with indubitably intellectual sweat on his brow, read *Yawning Heights* to the end for himself. Exhausted, but deeply moved by the dynamics of an enigmatic book that in its raw, *i.e.*, unrevised, abundance makes too many rather than too few demands on the receptivity of a reading public. Now for the world-wide argument about what, and who, is really meant.

Helen von Ssachno

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Katyn & the Little Conifers

By Nicholas Bethell

"If a man struggled, it seems that the executioner threw his coat over his head, tying it round his neck and leading him hooded to the pit's edge, for in many cases a man was found to be thus hooded and the coat to have been pierced by a bullet where it covered the base of the skull. But those who went quietly to their death must have seen a most monstrous sight. In the broad pit their comrades lay, packed closely round the edge, head to feet, like sardines in a tin, but in the middle of the grave disposed less orderly. Up and down on the bodies the executioners tramped, hauling the bodies about and treading in the blood like butchers in a stockyard. When it was all over and the last shot had been fired and the last Polish head punctured, the butchers, perhaps trained in youth to husbandry, turned their hands to the most innocent of occupations—smoothing the clods and planting little conifers all over what had been a shambles. . . ."

NO LURID PIECE OF FICTION, this is, in point of fact, an official diplomatic report dated 24 May 1943, by Owen O'Malley, then British Ambassador to the Polish government-in-exile. It was his attempt to reconstruct the massacres at Katyn and other places in Western Russia, where a total of 14,500 Polish officers were murdered in 1940. For more than 30 years the word "Katyn" has symbolised the evil done to Poland by the Soviet government. The greatest crimes, it is true, were committed in Stalin's day. But even today "Katyn" is the word which comes most often to Polish lips during moments of resentment at continuing Soviet rule over their country. Decades have passed, but Katyn remains a gaping wound in Poland's heart, a crime unacknowledged by the guilty and therefore not to be forgiven.

THE STORY BEGAN on 17 September 1939, when the Red Army invaded Poland by agreement with Nazi Germany. Within a few days Poland was conquered, and a large part of the Polish army was in Soviet captivity. Polish officers were singled out for particularly savage abuse by the Soviet authorities. During September German aircraft dropped leaflets calling on Polish soldiers to turn against their officers and kill them. So it was no surprise when Polish officers found themselves separated from the other prisoners-of-war and kept under particularly strict guard.

But for several months they were safe and, apparently, leading the normal life of prisoners-of-war. Their relatives exchanged letters with them regularly and were reassured. Then, in the spring of 1940, the letters stopped arriving. The officers' relatives were worried, but not unduly so, because the Soviet postal system was not always reliable, particularly in dealing with letters from prisoners to the outside world.

Poland was now occupied, so little could be done until the summer of 1941, when Hitler invaded Russia. Immediately Stalin turned the Poles from enemies into allies, and invited them to form an army on Soviet soil. General Wladyslaw Anders was taken from a prison cell to a luxury flat in Moscow (fully equipped with vodka and caviar) to be told that he was to be Commander of this new army. Naturally he needed his officers, his former colleagues from two years earlier. "Where are they?" he kept asking.

In the next few weeks hundreds of thousands of Poles, some former prisoners-of-war, others civilians convicted of "helping the bourgeoisie" or "being a socially unreliable element", were released from camps in various parts of the Soviet Union. But there was no sign of the officers. Their relatives and friends made repeated enquiries. Between August and October, 1940, the Polish Red Cross sent 500 questionnaires to the Soviet government about individual officers. The replies were suspiciously inconsistent. One reply claimed that all the officers had been released; another that they were "already in Germany"; another that no information was available. In October 1941, Molotov told the Polish Ambassador that a complete list of the officers was available, and that the men would all be delivered to the Polish authorities "dead or alive."

Their relatives began to fear the worst, but nothing was confirmed until in April 1943 the Nazis announced that they had found thousands of Polish officers in a mass grave, covered by recently planted conifers, at Katyn, 20 miles from Smolensk. The Nazis claimed that the NKVD had done the deed. The Soviet authorities claimed that it was the *Gestapo*, and they became very angry when various important Poles started suggesting otherwise and when Prime Minister Sikorski demanded a Red Cross inquiry.

Earlier, Sikorski had lunched with Winston Churchill and told him that he had "a wealth of evidence" demonstrating that the Soviet Union was responsible. But Churchill's main preoccupation was to preserve the Grand Alliance

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against Nazi Germany: the Red Army had just won the great victory of Stalingrad; the British 8th Army under Montgomery had just defeated General Rommel at El Alamein in North Africa. Churchill had announced that these victories meant "the end of the beginning" of the War, that from then on Hitler's Germany would be on the defensive. It seemed mad to him to risk this great enterprise for the sake of one terrible incident. He told Sikorski: "If they are dead, nothing you can do will bring them back." He used all his influence to try to persuade Sikorski to drop the matter. Sikorski appreciated the damage that an open breach with Russia would do to the War effort, but the pressure from his colleagues to take action was enormous. Many members of his government had lost relatives in the massacre.

THE REVELATIONS had a traumatic effect on the Poles in London. Firstly, there was the fact of the massacre itself: the loss of 14,500 officers, a large part of the leadership of pre-War Poland. Secondly, there was the fact that, according to their evidence, the act was committed not by their enemy, Nazi Germany, but by a country with which they were now officially in alliance. Thirdly—and this many of them found the most brutal fact of all—they found that their British hosts wanted them to keep silent and to allow a distortion of the truth to enter the record. And when a few of them, unable to restrain themselves, spoke publicly of their suspicions, they were accused of "disloyalty" and even of "collaboration with the enemy." Because of the demands of the War-time emergency, the innocent victims were turned into criminals.

Anthony Eden, Britain's Foreign Secretary, told the Cabinet on 19 April that:

> "he had done all he could to persuade the Poles to treat this as a German propaganda move designed to sow discord among the Allies . . . ."

On 4 May in answer to a question in the House of Commons he spoke of:

> "the cynicism which permits the Nazi murderers of hundreds of thousands of innocent Poles and Russians to make use of a story of mass murder in an attempt to disturb the unity of the Allies."

When pressed about the question of responsibility for the murders, he went on to say that the British government "have no wish to attribute blame for these events to anyone except the common enemy. . . ." He did not actually say that the massacres were committed by Nazi Germany, but he gave the clear impression that this was the case, and that Britain did not want the subject to be discussed. "Least said, soonest mended", he said, little realising that this was a controversy that would last for decades and would burst into flames in London 33 years later.

THE POLES WERE SOON UNDER ATTACK in Britain for daring to accuse the Soviet ally of such a crime.

"I have not met an officer who did not deplore the way the Poles have swallowed the German bait, hook, line and sinker", one Conservative Member of Parliament wrote to Eden. Britain's Communists were, of course, up in arms, mobilising trade-union branches to pass resolutions against the Polish government. "We are not prepared to give sanctuary and assistance to those circles who further Hitler's propaganda against the Soviet Union", said one resolution, passed by 3,000 workers of a Birmingham aircraft factory. In another factory shop stewards demanded the withdrawal of the Poles' ration of newsprint and its transfer to the Communist *Daily Worker*. Churchill told the Cabinet on 27 April:

> "No government which had accepted our hospitality had any right to publish articles of a character which conflicted with the general policy of the United Nations and which would create difficulties for this government."

On 20 April *Pravda* printed an article about Katyn under the title "HITLER'S POLISH COLLABORATORS."

That same week Soviet Ambassador Maisky spoke to Churchill:

> "The Poles were a brave but foolish race who had always mismanaged their affairs. Their feckless government could not understand the folly of a nation of 20 million provoking one of nearly 200 million. . . . Some of Sikorski's ministers were now anxious to help the Germans. Russia's patience was not inexhaustible."

Churchill replied that the affair "was indeed grim." Without commenting on Maisky's anti-Polish remarks, he repeated what he had told Sikorski, that the officers were dead and that it was the living Poles who required attention.

At the end of April the expected blow fell. Stalin broke off relations with the Polish government in London. On 8 May he told British Ambassador Clark Kerr that Sikorski was allowing himself to be swept along by pro-Hitler people, whom he was too weak to resist. The Polish government needed "reconstruction", he went on:

> "Its present members did not want to live at peace with this country. They had shifted to the Soviet government all the old hatred that they had felt for the Tsarist government. They did not understand the changes that had taken place. They persisted in trying to play one ally off against another. . . . They thought that this was clever, but in fact God had given them no brains."

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IN LONDON, CONSTERNATION INCREASED in official circles as more and more evidence appeared, indicating that the officers had indeed been massacred in the spring of 1940, more than a year before the German forces reached the Katyn area. Some of this was collected by Owen O'Malley and included in his report.[1] He mentioned, for instance, the question of the letters which suddenly stopped arriving around May 1940:

> "The Germans overran Smolensk in July 1941 and there is no easy answer to the question why, if any of the 10,000 had been alive between the end of May 1940 and July 1941, none of them ever succeeded in getting any word through to their families."

O'Malley also mentioned the self-contradictory answers to Polish enquiries during 1941. If they were released, as one Soviet answer claimed, why had not one single officer managed to make contact with the Polish authorities? If the Germans had really done the murders, the officers must at some point have passed from Soviet hands into German hands *en masse*, without one single escape. Could such a massive transfer really have happened during the confusion of June and July 1941, when the German armies were racing across Russia? And why were all the letters and newspapers found on the bodies dated during the spring of 1940? The *only explanation* that seemed to fit the facts, O'Malley noted, was that the officers were killed in 1940, while the Katyn area was still in Russian hands.

It seemed to O'Malley also that the massacre was no "tragic mistake", as one Soviet officer was supposed to have indicated in Moscow in a drunken conversation with the Polish Ambassador. Such a massive act of murder could hardly have happened by chance. Stalin's special dislike of the Poles was well-known. For hundreds of years Russia and Poland had fought one another, most recently in 1920. During his pre-revolutionary travels, Stalin had been to Poland and sensed their dislike of Russia, to whose empire they then belonged. More importantly, Poland had during the 1930s become a refuge for many anti-Stalin communists. The Polish Communist Party had become, Stalin believed, a nest of "Trotskyites", and in 1938 he dissolved it.

Stalin could not but see the Polish officer corps as one of the main supports of Poland before the War and a possible threat to the Soviet Union after the War. If such men as these continued to lead Poland, he may have thought, he would never succeed in his aim of creating "a Poland friendly to the Soviet Union", which was to mean in practice a Poland under Soviet control. It seemed to the Poles in London (and to O'Malley) that the massacre was not an error, but a deliberate act by Stalin aimed at beheading the Polish nation in readiness for the new role which he had chosen for it.

O'MALLEY AGREED THAT in the extraordinary circumstances of war Churchill's government had no choice but to go along with the Soviet story. But he felt obliged to point out the moral dangers which arose from this deliberately deceitful, if inevitable, course of action:

> "In handling the publicity side of the Katyn affair we have been constrained by the urgent need for cordial relations with the Soviet government to appear to appraise the evidence with more hesitation and lenience than we should do in forming a common sense judgment on events occurring in normal times or in the ordinary course of our private lives; we have been obliged to appear to distort the normal and healthy operation of our intellectual and moral judgments; we have been obliged to give undue prominence to the tactlessness or impulsiveness of Poles, to restrain the Poles from putting their case clearly before the public, to discourage any attempt by the public and the press to probe the ugly story to the bottom. In general we have been obliged to deflect attention from possibilities which in the ordinary affairs of life would cry to high heaven for elucidation, and to withhold the full measure of solicitude which, in other circumstances, would be shown to acquaintances situated as a large number of Poles now are. We have in fact perforce used the good name of England like the murderers used the little conifers to cover up a massacre."

By choosing this course, he went on, Britain was running the risk of falling under St Paul's curse on those who can see cruelty "and burn not." But given that Britain had no other way—that she had taken what was politically the correct decision, that in this special situation it was necessary to hide the truth—what was Britain to do? He had only one suggestion: "It may be that the answer lies, for the moment, only in something to be done inside our own hearts and minds where we are masters. Here at any rate we can make a compensatory contribution—a reaffirmation of our allegiance to truth and justice and compassion. . . ."

THE RECORD SHOWS that even in 1943 most British officials privately agreed with Ambassador Owen O'Malley's version of the story, even though of course publicly they had to support the Soviet version.

Denis Allen and Frank Roberts, two junior officials who later became British ambassadors, wrote that there must be "a presumption of guilt" against the Soviet government. Alexander Cadogan, head of the Foreign Office, wrote:

> "This is very disturbing. I confess that in cowardly fashion I have rather turned my head away from

[1] The Owen O'Malley report is available from the Public Record Office, London, reference FO 371 24467.

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> the scene at Katyn, for fear of what I might find there. . . . The ominous thing about this incident is the ultimate political repercussions. How, if Russian guilt is established, can we expect Poles to live amicably side by side with Russians for generations to come? I fear there is no answer to that question."

Cadogan was also disturbed by the thought that at the end of the War the Allies, including the Soviet Union, would arrest and execute various Nazi war criminals. Would they be able to do this, and at the same time condone the atrocity of Katyn? "I confess I shall find that extremely difficult to swallow", wrote Cadogan. But of course he did swallow it, and the Nuremberg trials took place as he predicted.

As soon as the War was over, Poles in London began pressing Britain to revise its position on Katyn. The War was won, and the most pressing need to treat the Soviet government politely had disappeared. But now there was a new factor inhibiting Britain from revealing the full truth—the need to "preserve good relations" with the Soviet Union. It is this argument which has overridden repeated Polish requests ever since. Officials feel that nothing is to be gained by "raking up the past." They are determined still to apply the proverb, "Least said, soonest mended."

In 1952 the Madden Committee of the US Congress declared that the massacre occurred in 1940, and that therefore the NKVD were responsible. But successive British governments have refused to modify the position they took in 1943. In 1971 a British minister, Lord Aberdare, said at the end of a debate on Katyn that his government had "absolutely no standing in the matter." The Communist Polish government had said that they regarded the incident as closed, he added, and their wishes in the matter should surely be respected.

Very few Poles would agree with the Minister that the present Polish government's wishes on Katyn were in any way to be respected, or indeed that its views on such a matter were of any significance. Unable to conceive that the Soviet government will ever allow the truth to be told—although it is said that Nikita Khrushchev considered this course of action during his campaign of "de-Stalinisation", only to be dissuaded by the then Polish leader Wladyslaw Gomulka—Poles have looked to Britain to set her seal of approval on what they have always seen as an unchallengeable fact—that the Katyn massacre was carried out by the NKVD.

Britain did, in O'Malley's words, use her good name to cover up the massacre. If it were not for the position taken by Britain in 1943, the Soviet version would not have been believed, even temporarily. It seems to the Poles, therefore, that Britain is the country best qualified to set the record straight. Because of her special relationship with the Polish government in London in 1943, her files on the subject are extensive and, one may assume, conclusive.

THE BRITISH POLICY OF SILENCE on Katyn was put to its most severe test in September 1976. For several years Poles in the West collected money for a memorial to the victims of the massacre. After many difficulties a site was obtained in a municipal cemetery controlled by the Borough of Kensington in London. A ceremony was arranged to take place on 18 September. For the first time the memory of the victims would be honoured publicly during the dedication of a special monument. The obelisk was built during the summer and bore the stark inscription "KATYN 1940."

The Soviet authorities knew of the planned ceremony and for years had been trying to prevent it. Julian Amery, M.P., recalls that in 1972, when he was a minister in the Foreign Office, the Soviet Embassy asked the then Conservative government to use its influence to kill the plan. "This was presented to us as a highly important request", says Amery. He thereupon sent for all the documents that his Ministry possessed about the subject, many of them still classified as highly secret. "It was perfectly clear that the Soviet Union was responsible for the massacre", he says. He told the Soviet Embassy that he could not interfere with the decision taken by the local authority to grant the site.

Early in 1976 this pressure was renewed. No fewer than ten protests and representations were made by the Soviet and Polish Embassies. Polish Ambassador Artur Starewicz protested personally in a letter to the Mayor of Kensington, Mrs Joselyn Sundius-Smith. A threatening letter was sent by Vladimir Semenov, councillor at the Soviet Embassy in London. Part of the text ran as follows:

> "Your reply is extremely regrettable, since you are well aware of the provocative purpose pursued by the organisers of the 'memorial project', who attempt to revive that vicious lie of the Goebbels propaganda concocted in order to cover up the crimes committed by Nazis. The inscription on the 'memorial' which the Council as you say has approved is wholly slanderous because it tends, following in the footsteps of the Goebbels lie against Britain's ally in the Second World War, to put on the Soviet Union the blame for the victims of Katyn. Having full knowledge of these facts the Council thus assumes entire responsibility for this provocation which is bound to raise indignation in the people of our country. We would like to expect that since the 'project' has not yet been realised the Council will find a way to prevent it."

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Councillor Semenov's rude letter had no effect on the local authority, nor were the Soviet and Polish Ambassadors able to persuade the Government to intervene. They probably did not understand the limits of central government power in a democratic country and that it would have been difficult for the government to prevent the ceremony, even if it wanted to. The bullying letters merely strengthened the resolve of the organisers of the memorial and gave them extra publicity.

But they did have some effect on the Foreign Office. The Soviet Ambassador made it clear that this was a matter of "great importance" and that British-Soviet relations would "suffer" if the ceremony went ahead. The Foreign Office was also embarrassed by its own past role in the affair: by the fact that it had distorted the truth in 1943 and allowed the distortion to remain uncorrected for 33 years. Weakly, it decided upon a compromise. It would do nothing to prevent the ceremony in September, but it would not allow any official British representation.

AND SO DURING THE SUMMER of 1976 it became apparent that 14,500 of Britain's War-time allies were about to be honoured by the dedication of a memorial—but that no British minister, no civil servant, and no senior member of the Armed Forces would be attending to pay respects. A British regimental band, which had previously promised to play funeral music, was obliged to withdraw its offer. Serving officers were told that they could not attend in uniform, even individually.

Bad Day at Hammersmith

THERE WAS *no official or uniformed British representation at the unveiling ceremony in Hammersmith yesterday to more than 14,000 Polish officers, killed or missing in the Soviet Union during the Second World War.*

Even if Katyn were more in doubt than it is, there was no reasonable objection to the Government's allowing uniformed officers and men of the British Forces to pay proper respects to the memory of these dead Poles.

MARSHAL OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE SIR JOHN SLESSOR WRITES: *"I am now credibly informed that a Foreign Office spokesman has said that the responsibility for the Katyn murders is a controversial one, and the British Government cannot involve itself by formal representation at the unveiling ceremony.*

"For gross bad manners and craven ingratitude this is surely unbeatable. It is, alas, only one more example of the sort of thing that makes it difficult nowadays to be proud of being British. . . . "

SUNDAY TIMES/THE TIMES

The Minister of Defence, Roy Mason, explained that the inscription "KATYN 1940" was an accusation which the Soviet government denied and that "it would not be right for the government to endorse one particular view by being represented at the unveiling ceremony." Any attendance by senior British officers would mean "the armed forces becoming involved in politically controversial matters." A statement by British Foreign Secretary Anthony Crosland contained the words:

> "Neither this nor previous administrations have considered the evidence firm enough to justify a governmental statement as to the responsibility for the massacre, and successive governments have therefore declined to make any such historical judgment."

A Foreign Office spokesman later made an even more extraordinary statement:

> "It has never been proved to Her Majesty's Government's satisfaction who was responsible [for the massacre]. We do not have the kind of firm evidence that we could put on the table, if we were required to do so, to prove that the Russians were responsible."

These statements caused dismay in many British circles for they are contradicted by Julian Amery's clear revelation of what lies in the Foreign Office's files, by the clearly expressed belief of every Foreign Office official who commented on the matter in 1943, by the unanimous verdict of competent Western historians, and even by numerous private statements by present-day Polish leaders, who have no doubt whatsoever that the NKVD is guilty, even though they feel it necessary to say the opposite publicly.

Under the heading "THE STIGMA OF KATYN" *The Times* wrote in a leading article: "In the 30 years since the end of the War enough has been published to convince anyone who is not a committed pro-Soviet apologist that the massacre did indeed occur in 1940, that is when Katyn was under Soviet and not German control." At the ceremony one of the organisers of the memorial, Rowley St Oswald, said that the "KATYN 1940" inscription "relates in stone another element of the truth, which only the guilty, the ignorant and the ignoble still crave to deny."

AND SO THE OBELISK STANDS in a cemetery in West London, an accusation as well as a memorial, a finger pointed not only at the Soviet government which committed the deed, which has not admitted its guilt or apologised, and so cannot be forgiven, but also at successive British governments which for 33 years have perpetuated the lie and used Britain's authority to cover up the massacres "like the murderers used the little conifers. . . ."

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LETTERS

Eysenck & Cyril Burt

WHAT A CURIOUS piece of business is the Eysenck article ("The Case of Sir Cyril Burt", January). Even granting the advances in genetic research and theory in recent decades, Eysenck's treatment of the popular revelations of doubt at the validity of Sir Cyril's empirical work ought not pass without some comment.

For example, Eysenck dismisses the "comic interlude of the missing ladies" after noting that Professor John Cohen has attested to the existence of the two women and commenting that Dr Gillie ought at least to have checked with Professor Cohen or even Eysenck himself. Fair enough; but the questions still remain whether the two women did in fact collaborate with Sir Cyril; and, if they did, whether they can shed any light on the curious lapses which Professor Arthur Jensen's review of Burt's work revealed. Procedural arguments are lovely fun, but the issue is a substantive one, and a politically serious one at that.

Eysenck also tries to make the case that the *Sunday Times* has it in for Burt by showing that they played false with Eysenck. We can sympathise with Professor Eysenck's irritation, especially those of us that have been treated similarly; but that neither proves nor disproves the immediate case. Might as well conclude because they made one error, everything else is false, too. Yet Professor Eysenck apparently still reads the *Sunday Times*!

Finally, it should give us pause that Eysenck, a scientist, would ask us to believe that Burt's "advances in data analysis and model building" ought not be disturbed by the doubts raised about the accuracy or adequacy of the data and the correlations "identical from analysis to analysis, even to the third decimal" which Jensen's re-examination revealed. Surely scientists and laymen alike ought to demand some relationship between theories and data, and, in the absence of the ability to believe proffered data, ought to be free to treat as merely naked hypotheses the theoretical discussion which accompanied the now discredited analysis?

THESE ARE obvious points. It is important to make them over and over again because we are dealing with an intricately complex scientific problem that is inextricably political as well. The popular press has an absolute right to "sensationalise" that which is sensational (albeit we should hope for some degree of temperance in the use of such terms as "fake" and "fraud" which impute motivation where none can be known). Dr Jensen's long article on the relationship between IQ and scholastic achievement rested heavily on Sir Cyril's work (Burt was cited ten times, as often as Jensen cited himself, and the next highest frequency of citation being N. Bayley with four). It argued racial differences in IQ, and recommended a two-track educational system with obvious implications for instructional segregation as a consequence. Jensen's analysis became part of the rationale for the slow-down in US Federal support for education and with it what might be termed the educational enfranchisement (in terms of aspirations and outcomes) of a major portion of population in this country.

Scientists must be held accountable for their science, but also for the politics that flow out of or are imbedded in their science, whether they intend those politics or not. Membership in the scientific community is a privilege as well as a hard-won achievement; and the norms and mores that guide scientists as a group are not necessarily those to which the rest of the body politic might ultimately subscribe. (I am certainly not arguing for a political test for scientists, only the recognition that they are politically accountable, that their rights to public money, the scholarly press, and the public forum are circumscribed by important responsibilities.)

PROFESSOR EYSENCK'S comments about the extent to which geneticists deal with interactions are important; but he understates the complexity of the matter. Interaction effects are tremendously difficult to unravel in social science. The almost unbelievable neuro-physiological complexity of the human organism has within it uncharted interactions, "overrides", compensatory mechanisms, and the like which multiply the problem internally. Finally, the interactions between values, attitudes, and beliefs with (*1*) the concepts under exploration, and (*2*) the methods used add still a third domain of interaction. These three domains are not merely additive; they are multiplicative. They demand greater degrees of caution than Sir Cyril displayed or than Professor Eysenck musters in defence of Burt's contributions.

HENDRIK D. GIDEONSE

Dean, College of Education
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

IF ABUSE devoid of reason could make a case then H. J. Eysenck (January) has made a case against Oliver Gillie. Should, however, reason and accuracy be the ingredients of a civilised debate then, as usual, Eysenck has no case.

He berates Gillie for not interviewing him before writing his piece, yet cannot say what difference it would have made. Referring to M. Howard he says that John Cohen "has since written to say that he was in point of fact acquainted with one of the two women." It is not true. Cohen does not and, it would appear, cannot say that he met *the* Margaret Howard. Gillie's article has achieved world-wide publicity. Yet no friend, relation or acquaintance has come forward to say that he or she knew the women who collaborated with Burt.

Eysenck forgets that before Burt began to "adjust" his scores, he scorned the idea of tinkering with them. For example, in 1943 he said: "But in regard to innate general ability there can be no question, the unaided judgments even of the most experienced teachers, shrewd as they are in many cases, are nevertheless far less trustworthy in the long run than the results obtained with properly applied intelligence tests."

His assertion (p. 21) that ". . . This made it impos-

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sible for him [Burt] to list the tests used" is not correct. Burt *does* list the tests used. He says (1966) "*The tests employed have been fully described elsewhere* (Burt 1921, 1933) . . . . They consisted of (*i*) a group test of intelligence containing both non-verbal and verbal items, (*ii*) an individual test (the London revision of the Terman-Binet Scale) used primarily for standardisation, and for doubtful cases (*iii*) a set of performance tests . . . standardised by Miss Gaw (1925)" (italics added).

Adjustment of IQ scores, if scientifically made, would be acceptable. The question, however, is: Did Burt have IQ scores to adjust or did he just invent them? Concerning this, Burt (1955) says that "For the assessment of the parents we relied chiefly on personal interviews; but in doubtful and borderline cases an open or a camouflaged test was employed." However, describing the same situation Burt & Howard (1957) say, "But in each of our surveys, assessments were individually obtained from a representative sample of parents, checked for purposes of standardisation, by tests of the usual type." The manner in which guessed scores are being given scientific respectability is so obvious as to require no comment. It is difficult to disagree with Gillie's charge of faking.

Eysenck quotes Jensen to the effect that for Burt his data could be a "backdrop" to illustrate important theoretical points. In this they show profound ignorance of Burt's work. Moreover, Jensen seems to forget that a few years ago he described Burt's analysis of his data as "most satisfactory."

Eysenck asks what damage these revelations do to the hypothesis preferred by Burt. If the invective shown by him and Jensen is any guide, the answer must be: a great deal.

He says that "False ideas unfortunately abound in this field." He is the source of many of them, and I have occasionally tried to correct the misconceptions in his work. He mentions Fisher. The model of assortative mating given by Fisher in 1918 appears to be the only model applicable to IQ. Burt and Howard used it as well. It *assumes* no genotype-environment interaction or covariance. Moreover, no matter what he says, the model has not been generalised by anyone. Indeed, most geneticists do not even understand it. It divides the total variance into genetic and environmental components. If he has finally understood that "No experiment can be designed to measure one influence apart from the other", he would realise that the Fisherian technique of variance analysis has some limitations. Moreover, he should not commend methods which were invented with the specific aim of finding the genetic, environmental, and other components of the phenotypic variance.

Burt's exposé does reflect on the hypothesis he was propagating. Abuse cannot breathe life into discredited hypotheses. We should thank Gillie and start again.

ATAM VETTA

Oxford Polytechnic
Headington, Oxford

H. J. Eysenck's Reply

THE METHOD OF ARGUMENTATION used by the Burt-bashers makes it difficult for me to answer their points because these are so numerous and so shifting that one does not really know what precisely is being said. I pointed out that Dr Oliver Gillie had failed to make out a case for fraudulence and faking on the part of Burt. Whatever the invective of Drs Vetta and Gideonse, they still leave me with the distinct impression that they have not proceeded on the basis of assuming innocence until guilt was proven. Fraud, to take but one example, is defined by the *Oxford Dictionary* as "criminal deception, use of false representations to gain unjust advantage." To "prove" such fraud Vetta actually quotes Burt's own words! Now if Burt intended to *deceive*, then clearly he could not and would not have described exactly what he did in such a way as to enable Vetta to quote him against himself. Whatever Burt might have been guilty of, it surely was not fraud.

Vetta goes on into some technicalities, assuring us that "most geneticists do not even understand" Fisher's 1918 model which has been fundamental to modern behavioural genetics. Not having given an examination on the point to most geneticists, I would not know. However, the model was used by Burt and Cattell; and was finally translated into a usable method of analysis by Mather, Jinks, Fulker, and others at the Department of Genetics in Birmingham. If Vetta does not approve of their methods, then I think a technical journal of genetics would be a more suitable place to say so than the pages of ENCOUNTER. I may, of course, be doing Dr Vetta an injustice; his English makes it difficult to understand what he is trying to say. What, for instance, should one make of a sentence like "Burt's exposé does reflect on the hypothesis he was propagating." Does Dr Vetta know what exposé means? In or out of context I can make no sense of the sentence whatsoever.

I agree with Professor Gideonse that the fact that the *Sunday Times* on a previous occasion misrepresented Burt and had to apologise, or the fact that they completely traduced arguments of my own, does not prove or disprove the immediate case. It simply illustrates the fact that the *Sunday Times* is extremely careless in its investigative journalism, and that one should not take too seriously things it presents as facts.

THERE IS NO DOUBT about the importance of Cyril Burt's contribution to behavioural genetical analysis, and this is acknowledged by those who later on advanced the methods we now use. Any doubts cast on his data cannot affect this judgment, and I am surprised that Professor Gideonse should think that it did. Professor Gideonse comments on the complexity of interaction. Geneticists are well aware of these complexities. That is why the new statistical methods used in unravelling the problem are highly technical, and difficult to understand without proper training—a training which unfortunately educationalists and psychologists hardly ever receive! I agree with Professor Gideonse on the importance of the matter, and would hope that he would join me in advocating that in the future courses on elementary and advanced behavioural genetics should be given to all students of education and psychology. Verbal discussions of these matters are really quite beside the point, just as it would be rather absurd to discuss quantum theory

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or relativity theory in purely verbal terms, The problems are quantitative; and any discussions, to be properly rational, must also be along quantitative lines.

I agree with Professor Gideonse on the social implications of genetic research, and the theories propounded by psychologists and geneticists. In this connection, let us not forget that there is no doubt whatsoever about the frauds and fakes produced and committed by such wholesale Environmentalists as Lysenko, or the fact that many first-rate geneticists were killed in labour camps and in other ways through his direct influence. Whatever may have been the sins of Sir Cyril Burt, they fade into complete insignificance in relation to the atrocities committed by these academic advocates of 100% Environmentalism. Let us also remember the suppression of data, the one-sided presentation of facts, the distortion of theories, the refusal to countenance adequate research, and other similar crimes against the scientific community of which environmentalists have been guilty in his and my countries. Two wrongs do not make a right, and I have joined Arthur Jensen in deploring Burt's errors of omission and commission. Nevertheless, they should be seen in the context of much worse errors on the other side.

THE SITUATION SEEMS TO ME both confused and unsatisfactory. Two facts are certain. One is that Burt seems to have committed certain errors of procedure and analysis which must exclude his data from further consideration; and the other that accusations of fraud and faking have not been proved. Under the circumstances it seemed desirable for an impartial investigation of the accusations against him to be carried out. I have written to suggest to the Ethical Committee of the British Psychological Society that they should set up a Committee to investigate these charges and to hear in detail all the people who have anything factual to contribute to the controversy; a similar suggestion has been made to the Ethical Committee of the American Psychological Association.

The investigation should be, not only of Burt's alleged misdeeds, but also of the behaviour of a journalist, and a well established Sunday newspaper, whose sensationalised presentation of unproven allegations has dragged what should have been a proper scientific controversy, conducted with appropriate calm and reasonableness, into a public marketplace which does not understand the issues and cannot follow the arguments. Professor Gideonse states that "the popular press has an absolute right to 'sensationalise' that which is sensational." I disagree. There is nothing sensational about such errors as Burt might have made; the "sensation" is entirely journalist-made and unworthy of a great newspaper.

H. J. EYSENCK

Institute of Psychiatry
London

Beatrice Webb's "Racism"

MARGARET COLE (November) WANTS us to believe that Beatrice Webb was not an anti-Semite because some of her best friends were Jews; that even if she had some uncomplimentary things to say about Jews it was before she became a socialist and, finally, that she may have been an anti-Zionist but, Dame Margaret adds, "it is quite wrong to equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, particularly in those far-off days."

But those "far-off days" aren't so far off as to deny them their virulence when it comes to making scapegoats of the Jews. In this connection it is worth noting that every generation seems to acquire its own ideological motivation for savaging the "eternal enemy."

In the last couple of hundred years we have seen Enlightened anti-Semitism (Voltaire and his circle), Socialist anti-Semitism, Anarchist anti-Semitism, Czarist anti-Semitism, Soviet anti-Semitism, Racial anti-Semitism, Clerical anti-Semitism, and Populist anti-Semitism; while Gutter anti-Semitism we always have with us.

Today the climate for "far-off" anti-Zionist anti-Semitism is having its own renascence as witness the success of the PLO in almost getting total approval at the UN for its Zionism-Equals-Racism resolution. So I would reply to Dame Margaret's urging that "it is wrong to equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism" by asserting that it is not only *not* wrong—it is *necessary*.

MAX GELTMAN

New York City

Bernstein and the Webbs

DR HELMUT HIRSCH [ENCOUNTER, March] has a valid point when he mentions Eduard Bernstein's intimate relationship with the Webbs. This throws an interesting sidelight on the whole debate—for Bernstein was certainly sensitive to any manifestation of anti-Semitism but never mentioned it in connection with the Webbs. Perhaps he was not very familiar with all their writings and opinions about Jews, but in any case Bernstein remains at best a secondary source.

ROBERT S. WISTRICH

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Margaret Cole Replies

WHAT A HULLABALOO I seem to have raised about Beatrice Webb. As you printed such a sheaf of letters in your January issue I hope you will allow me to make this further contribution.

The important thing which your contributors fail to realise is the great gap, in time and in public attitude, between the days when Beatrice Potter was working in London and those in which they themselves grew up. During the latter part of the 19th century and the earlier part of the 20th century the venomous anti-Semitism of earlier generations had largely died down, except in so far as it was stimulated from outside, by the fierce racialist propaganda (and racial persecution) in Russia and the chief countries of the continent of Europe. There were, of course, exceptions, *e.g.* Hilaire Belloc and the Rudyard Kipling who wrote the unpardonably savage attack which he published under the title *Gehazi*. But, generally speaking, Jewish characteristics and practices were regarded more as material for jokes and humorous stories. I cannot see, by the way, why recognition of such things as kosher regulations, Sabbath-keeping,

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and strong family feeling should be regarded as proof of "racialism" or as *inviting* persecution. These characteristics, like those of other less numerous groups, existed in plain view of everybody. And do not the Jews themselves think of themselves as God's chosen? One would have to be a complete illiterate not to know that.

All this changed when the behaviour of the Nazis became widely known. Jokes about "Jewry" and "Jewishness" became obscene and anti-social almost overnight. The change can be paralleled, in another field, by the movement of thought which changed two moving lines of *Ole Man River* to

> *Some folks work on de Mississippi:*
> *Some folks work while other folks play*

—which may be unimpeachable but is certainly uninspiring!

As to the distinction between Zionism and anti-Semitism, George Feaver says it is important and Robert Wistrich says it is "a red herring." Take your choice. But I am sure many of your readers must have met, as I have time and again, people who drew the distinction which Beatrice drew and who, like her, found the Balfour Declaration a dangerous and ill thought-out document.

So much for "anti-Semitism." Now for some lesser points.

(1) Beatrice did not refuse to do "recognised" social work, as is implied in Shirley Letwin's letter. When her sister Kate married, she took over, in collaboration with the well-known Ella Pycraft, the business of rent-collecting and advising in St Katharine's Buildings (see *Diaries*, 1903–5, and *My Apprenticeship* for really mordant criticism of the life supposed to be lived by the tenants in this "charitable" foundation). Her not very enthusiastic appreciation of the Charity Organisation Society was based partly on their sense of order, and what they did to stop the ignorant charitable from being exploited by professional scroungers who did nothing else for a living. But, by the time of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, Beatrice had come to see the COS as no less oppressive than some of the Boards of Guardians and some of the Home Office inspectors, and had certainly ceased to think kindly of it (as her *Diary* between 1905 and 1909 clearly shows).

(2) As to Sidney's nose—if that is held to be important—the simple explanation is one of date! The first reference quoted by George Feaver dates from their first meeting, when the comment was natural and not in the least significant. The second comes from the eulogistic picture of Sidney written 35 years later in her preface to *Our Partnership*, where Beatrice is making public acknowledgement and thanks for all that Sidney did for her—to my mind, a moving piece of writing even though it had a touch of loving exaggeration. I do not think—nor did Bernard Shaw—that Sidney really looked like a Roman emperor on a coin. But those who want to examine his nose closely can consult the many photographs, or the Nicholson painting at the London School of Economics.

(3) Finally, the absurd accusation that Beatrice had an "antipathy" to individual persons. Anyone who believes that can hardly have read the passages in the *Diaries* describing the relatives whom she found on her visits to Bacup, or indeed the many other descriptions and character sketches which are to be found on page after page in the full *Diary* text. It is true that she and Sidney looked more to better organisation of society than to individual acts of charity for improvement of the condition of the people. It is also true, as Sir Robert Ensor observed in the chapter he contributed to the book *The Webbs and Their Work*, that their judgment of individual politicians was often bad, leading them, for example, to pin their hopes, at the turn of the century, to Haldane and Edward Grey rather than Campbell-Bannerman or Lloyd George. They were also—perhaps because their own married life was so happy and satisfying—insufficiently aware of the power of emotion in the life of their country, so that the election results of 1906, 1918, and 1931 took them by surprise and Beatrice at least believed that the campaign to break up the Poor Law would have more public success than it did. It could be added that Beatrice, delicate in youth and fastidious by nature, did not appreciate being squashed in crowds in Tottenham Court Road—who does?

But anyone who thinks that this amounts to *antipathy* or *inhumanity* should look again at what Beatrice did for Herbert Spencer, or their many generosities to those who opposed them and their kindness to those who sought their help—and who have acknowledged it on more than one occasion. The accusation is stark nonsense. I should perhaps add that if Beatrice had come into close contact with "a *concrete* human being"—whatever that may be—she would not have liked it. Nor should I!

MARGARET COLE

London

Mosley Objects

YOUR MISUNDERSTANDING of the facts of life is more important than your references to me in your February issue [R's Column]. But may I deal first with my alleged anti-Semitism? Not only did I never raise the subject in the first years of our movement's life; we also ran Jewish candidates. It was not until some Jews appeared to me to be driving for an unnecessary war with Germany that I attacked them, and anyone else doing the same thing. A subsidiary factor was that in the previous period 50% of the police court convictions for physical attacks on our members came from less than 1% of the population which is Jewish. The quarrel ended with the occasion, and had nothing to do with anti-Semitism which is to attack all Jews on account of race or religion.

Your comparison of the progress of our movement with that of the German Nazis shows a misunderstanding of the facts of life which can be dangerous in present circumstances. The arrival of any kind of new movement in power depends entirely on the economic situation; a fact proved repeatedly in modern History. Germany had over 6,000,000 unemployed. Neither Germans nor British would stand anything of the kind, but it only happened there. In the few years before the Nazis came to power unemployment in Germany increased four and a half times. In the few years after our movement

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London

PARAMETER: It remains only to record [Bernard Levin writes] the melancholy fact that nobody in or around the case of the Crossman Diaries, and the "parameters" of its censorship, from start to finish, bothered to look up the word "parameter" in a dictionary, all of them being convinced that it means the same as perimeter but sounds more impressive. In the course of the proceedings, parameters were contravened, intruded across, counted, contradicted, fallen foul of, breached, worked to, found and applied; parameters also spoke and stood up. Hopefully, the word will be abandoned at this moment in time, or at any rate keep a low profile, lest it escalate.

THE TIMES

Westminster

ALL AT SEA: *Mr Maxwell-Hyslop, M.P. raised the issue on a point of order. He centred his argument on a vessel called the Key Victoria, which had been under construction in the Marathon yard and so qualified the firm for inclusion in the Bill.*

The technical issue at contention is whether the Key Victoria is by definition an oil rig or a ship. Mr Maxwell-Hyslop contended that it fell within the legal definition of a ship because it was "designed to float, and to move from one location to another by navigating the sea."

The American Bureau of Ships, he said, had issued a certificate of tonnage certifying that the Key Victoria was of 3,885 gross registered tons. It was undoubtedly a ship.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

POETRY: *These are dark days for the Great British Euphemism. In fact, it's becoming an endangered species. You used to read in the newspapers that "intensive consultations have been taking place among Government circles closest to the Prime Minister." Now you read: "Wilson aide throws screaming Marcia across hotel room."*

No delicacy at all. Leaves nothing to the imagination. In the old days, when it was alleged that "differences of opinions have developed at a high level over the liquidity situation", you could let your fancy roam over a host of intriguing possibilities.

Now they dispel the suspense straight off: "I threw a glass of whisky over Joe Haines." Takes all the poetry out of it.

DAILY MAIL

London

NOMINALIST HERESY: *Person—It is time to eliminate sexism from English literature. A committee of distinguished author-persons should be set up to revise the titles of books, plays, etc., so that outmoded masculine and feminine words are replaced by acceptable neutral words* [PETER (*or* PETULA) WOTTON *writes*]. *Some examples of revised titles are "The Invisible Person" by H. G. Wells; "One Stoops to Conquer" by Goldsmith; "People in Love" by D. H. Lawrence; "Personsfield Park" by J. Austen; and "Dombey and Descendant" by Charles (or Carol) Dickens.*

"Person and Superperson" by G. B. Shaw smacks of an offensive inegalitarianism but "Person and Dis-similar, but Complementary, Person" may be acceptable.

Unfortunately, the English language does not possess, at present, neutral words which can be used in place of Christian names or other words which denote a particular sex. In these cases alternative versions of books, etc., should be produced to counter-balance the original works. For example, a bookseller offering "Mary Barton" by Mrs. Gaskell would be required to stock an equal number of copies of the alternative version "Mark Barton" by Mr. Gaskell.

In the case of plays the version to be adopted for any particular production would depend upon whether a male or female actperson was playing the title role.

Some examples of alternative titles are "Henrietta IV" (in two equal parts), "Eve Bede" by Georgina Eliot and "Olivia Twist" (with the horrifying scene where Bill Sikes is murdered by Nancy, the karate expert).

Lack of space prevents me from doing more than mentioning other fields of literature which need attention such as Shakespearian songs ("It was a lover and the lover's companion"), popular mythology (it will be required that Parent Christmas should be clean-shaven), the thriller ("Cowbitch Drummond") and the detective story where a decision must be made whether the female counterpart of the world's most famous detective should be called Shelock or Herlock.

The task is urgent since, when sexual bias has been eliminated from English literature, it will be necessary to deal with world literature. As a preliminary thought, I suggest that the works of Longperson may be accepted but those of Thomas Mann will have to be banned.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

THE JARGON FRONT: A jargon-word which is doing quite nicely in a quiet way (it cannot, as yet, compete with "situation") is "dimension." The "Irish dimension" is familiar; now we have the "Scottish dimension," used the other day in the Commons during a debate on the Ship-building Bill.

Will "dimension" achieve a real "breakthrough" or (as we jargonics experts say) "take-off"? We shall know it has done so when we hear of the "unemployment dimension" or the "multi-racial dimension" or the "Women's Lib dimension."

After that [Peter Simple writes] there will be no holding it. "Dimension" may even combine with "situation", which is now showing slight signs of exhaustion, in a super-jargonic situation dimension which, hopelessly, will have no definable parameters.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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began unemployment was halved; chiefly owing to the armament boom which preluded the escape from economic crisis into war. Even so we polled 19% of the votes recorded where housing conditions were execrable. The Germans in general polled less than we did until their unemployment soared.

The fact of life important to understand is that a change of system is inevitable in a certain degree of economic crisis. The nature of the change and the character of the participants is a vital question. Before turning to fascism of a very different variety in a last effort to get something done I discussed a national government with Lloyd George, the young Conservatives, Aneurin Bevan and associates, as Harold Macmillan and others have recorded. It was my first choice in the crisis which did not then develop. My only choice today is a national government drawn more widely from the whole country in the crisis which is now inevitable. Cannot we discuss it reasonably?

OSWALD MOSLEY

Orsay
France

As I WROTE the Column to which Sir Oswald Mosley presumably refers, may I try to answer his letter, though I am not sure I follow his argument.

It really is not true, and history does not prove it, that "the arrival of any kind of new movement in power depends entirely on the economic situation." It depends also on other factors, including the influence of individuals; and it is precisely the complicated, confused and often obscure relationship between all these factors which makes it difficult, at any particular moment, for a politician, or an historian, to read the situation correctly. Otherwise everything would be simple.

But if the economic situation were in fact the sole determinant, then one would have to say that in the '30s Sir Oswald got the situation strangely wrong. Perhaps this is what his letter is meant to say. He founded his Blackshirt movement at a time when the worst of the Great Slump was over, and economic conditions were improving, not deteriorating. In such circumstances, why should he have hoped for any kind of success for a movement which, like Fascism in Italy and National Socialism in Germany, aimed at a total subversion of political and national life?

Hitler might have detected the hand of Providence at work in allowing him to run a race which brought him to the winning post before it was too late. Sir Oswald chose to run when the course conditions were against him, and in this he made a profound political mistake.

As for Sir Oswald's anti-Semitism, I am perfectly willing to accept his claim that in the early years of his movement he never raised the question of the Jews, and only did so later because he thought that some Jews (which?) were driving us into an "unnecessary war" with Germany. But then he and his movement really did attack them, in ways which I feel sure he must now regret.

Here again I think Sir Oswald made a profound mistake, as regards both the Jews and the War, and at the same time showed a singular failure to understand the character and temper of his fellow countrymen. There is a sense in which all wars can be said to be "unnecessary." In 1939 there were better reasons for going to war than in most cases, but again Sir Oswald did not understand them.

It is a sad story, because his is a story of wasted talents and abilities. But when one has been wrong on such vital issues, I do not think one has the right to claim that the "facts of life" are on one's side.

R

London

Saul Bellow's Quotation

IT WILL SURELY not have escaped your attention that at the heart of Saul Bellow's address in Stockholm, on the occasion of his Nobel Prize for Literature, there was a detailed consideration of a recent issue of ENCOUNTER. Although it was a critical and somewhat bemused reading of the various articles in that particular number, it was certainly a tribute to one of the most alert and stimulating magazines of our time.

Unfortunately, no magazine edited by mortal hand can be free of error. I am one of Saul Bellow's translators, and while doing the German version of the Stockholm address I puzzled over one quotation which he had cited from an ENCOUNTER article.

The difficulty occurs in Mr George Watson's "Race & the Socialists" (ENCOUNTER, November 1976). Watson quotes in his conclusion from a court-room statement which was made in the course of Ulrike Meinhof's cross-examination to the effect: "Auschwitz meant that six million Jews were killed and thrown on to the waste-heap of Europe, for what they were: money Jews (*Geldjuden*)." This is not quite accurate. According to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*'s report (which Watson cites as his source, 15 December 1972), she said "that . . . Jews were killed . . . for what they were portrayed to be [*i.e.*, claimed to be, or rigged up to be, by the Nazis]"; in German it read: "*als das, als was man sie ausgab.*" Ulrike Meinhof may have been wildly extreme, and indeed even demented; but she did not happen to be anti-Semitic. If she hated a Jew, she hated him because he was a capitalist, not because of his "race" or religion. She continued her deposition with the words that she "felt a historical identity with the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto who without arms attempted an uprising and let themselves be slaughtered. . . . "

I think this ought to be put on the record. To be sure, your current debate will rage on whether a hatred of the Capitalist who happens to be a Jew—as in a great revolutionary tradition from Marx to Meinhof—is not often something more than a simple political prejudice and ideological antipathy. In any case, what Dr Watson calls "the passion for exterminating your enemies" probably needs little excuse in metaphysical niceties. But the reference as it stands in ENCOUNTER may have misled more than Saul Bellow among your readers.

WALTER HASENCLEVER

Cuxhaven
West Germany

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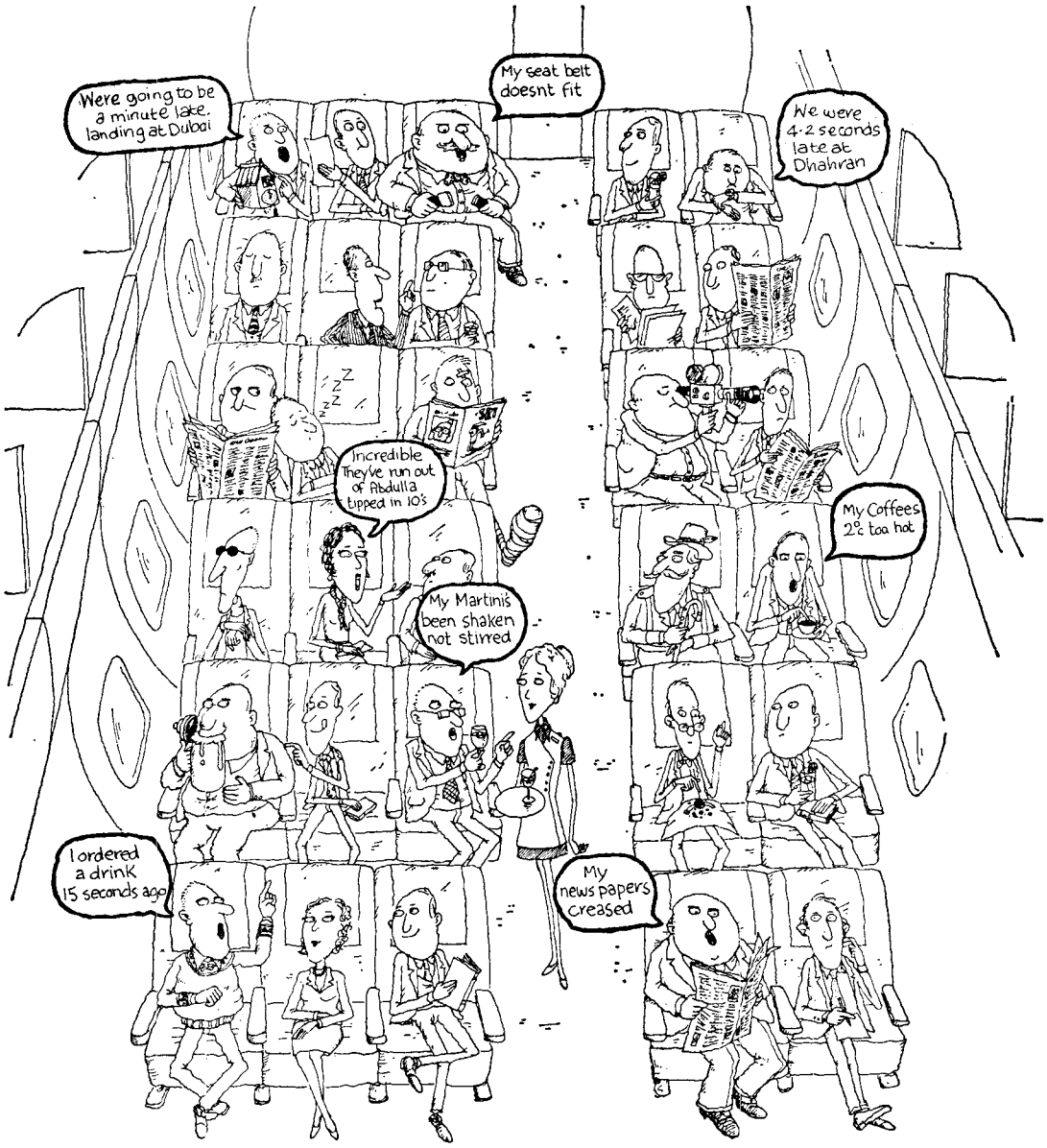
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